

Putting Safety First for the Urban Poor on the Local Agenda

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CITYNET



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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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HIGHLIGHTS OF SESSION 1: OPENING CEREMONIES

From Mayor Marides Fernando of Marikina City

- Marikina whose vision of a safe and clean city evolves around safety from diseases, dangers, violence, and calamities. It also follows the popular philosophy of “fixing broken window panes” in pursuing peace and order, which implies that people adapt themselves to the environment so that when it is in disarray, bad elements reign in public places, and when it is fixed, order pervades and bad elements are supplanted by law-abiding citizens.
- Other programs and facilities have supported this ‘safe and clean program’, as with pedestrian sidewalks, a network of bicycle lanes, formal settlement sites, and idle lands converted to viable productive spaces such as recreational areas.
- Promoting urban safety goes beyond law enforcement by entailing collective and innovative efforts to reduce opportunities for the commission of crimes, the control of spread of diseases, making a disaster-resilient community, and addressing socio-economic issues such as poverty.



From Elkin Velasquez of UN-HABITAT, Safer Cities Coordinator

- The message of social prevention is cooperation among various sectors, national and local governments to dialogue and work together to advance reforms in education, social protection, and other dimensions of community life. The victory to be attained in this endeavor will produce social cohesion, thereby, reducing poverty.
- Our safety (the cities’ safety) is a matter of social cohesion, a matter of social prevention, a matter of working with the community.
- In Latin America’s experience, prevention policies applied at the local level are able to advance reduction of crimes, thus, UN-HABITAT works closely with local authorities, precisely for the purpose of coordinating, improving capacity for decision-making in order to make public policies and social prevention programs.
- The time has come for concerned people, such as this group to facilitate change and dialogues such as this regional workshop where everyone present can learn from the experiences of others and knowledge of what is taking place in the different cities throughout the world.





- Thus, there is a need to develop a future agenda, including the creation of regional framework/actions to understand our role and biases in increasing our capacity to resolve local problems.

From Karin Andersson of UNESCAP

- UNESCAP is the regional arm of UN with the objective of working for/facilitating south-south cooperation among members.
- Urban safety has been taken as a primary concern of the organization considering threats to human security is becoming a major issue in Asia-Pacific with the increasing victims of domestic violence, organized crimes, and other related crimes. In this context, it has been the poor communities who are often the victims of institutional crimes, and other types of crimes, furthermore legal services are often out of reach for the poor.
- It is clear how important it has become to look further into policies and approaches. Thus, the conference intends to promote dialoguing with the communities and police, and to, consequently, improve the lives of the urban poor.



From Mary Jane Ortega, former Mayor of San Fernando, the Philippines and current Secretary-General of CITYNET

- As a former elected official and currently serving as the first woman elected as Secretary-General of CITYNET, our province has showcased urban safety in its very basic form, as in street lightings, provision of solar lamps (considering the “brownout” occurrences in the Philippines), sufficient public parks, and rubberized flooring in children’s playgrounds.
- A safer city could prevent disasters, whether man-made or natural. Life spans can be an indicator of people’s security condition. In La Union (Secretary-General Ortega’s province), citizens have an average life span of 75 years, the longest in the country. This can be contributed to peace and order in the region.



From Usec David Lozada of Department of Health, Republic of the Philippines

- Urban safety is on the agenda for both national and local governments in the Philippines.
- It is through the exercise of political will that enables these governments to provide the needed services to the urban poor communities to enable them improve their lives, thereby, making





themselves secure.

- Areas covered in ensuring safety among the urban poor: community participation, strong human resource management, etc.



HIGHLIGHTS OF SESSION 2: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR URBAN SAFETY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A. As presented by Donovan Storey, the key findings on the urban safety and poverty in Asia and the Pacific are as follows:

- Despite poverty, Asian cities are not suffering from high crimes. Though there is an increasing level of social and institutional violence. The implication is such that “failed cities” affect national economies and stability.
- There are also development costs to urban insecurity, namely: hindrance to business growth to include flight or absence of FDI, limitations to mobility and use of transport infrastructure, migration causing loss of critical manpower.
- Unsafe cities are also created by widening household tensions as a result of domestic violence which limits the social life of women and girls and affects their ability to participate economically in society.
- Urban planning and design can ensure safe places. However, present planning approaches contributes to spatial segregation, exclusion, and vacant spaces and even mixed use of public areas become more unsafe and breeds more insecurity.
- There is a complex relationship between poverty and crime/violence, that is, poverty may result in crime and crime may result in poverty.
- The youth often become part of the urban problem because of issues confronting them, such as the lack of opportunities in education, employment, social growth, poor environment, family breakdown, etc. Crime has become alternative socialization for these youth.
- Safety is a local concern, thus, LGUs play a key role in safety partnerships with communities, link institutions, policing and social networks.



B. Community Police Partnership in Bangladesh

- It came about as a response to the question “Are we ready to work together?”
- It is a program in Dhaka where the community and police were brought closer to enable them to work together on improving safety and security at the community level. The underlying approaches utilized: getting back to the community, consultation, and partnership.



C. Safety for the Poor in Kathmandu

- Ensuring safety by the Metropolitan Police: Some reforms put in place---(1) professionalization of police force; (2) awareness programs on drugs, crime prevention, especially among the youth; (3) formation of community-based networking;



(4) setting up of anti-kidnapping unit. These have lowered the commission of crime in Dashain from 35 to 5 in 2010.

- Improving urban safety called for the (1) collaboration and coordination among police, LGUs, communities, NGOs supported by poverty reduction programs, (2) establishment of police stations in poor communities, neighborhood watch groups, (3) advocacy work on legislation regarding violence affecting women, as well as a gender sensitivity program for the police, creation of women and children's services, (4) building political commitment to make the police force an independent security force, and (5) bringing the informal sector under the police security umbrella.
- Meaningful efforts of the city government: coordination among stakeholder agencies, from government to NGOs and civil society, completion of the program "towards the elimination of child labor," informal education, skills training and awareness programs for the poor, enriching the accessibility of access for the poor to basic amenities and the mobilization of community police to resolve security issues.



D. Urban Safety and Concerns of Bhutan

- Key issues on urban safety cover both tangible and intangible dimensions where planning serves as main instrument in addressing them. Specifically, (1) owing to the country's geological and meteorological condition, it forced the region to package their natural disaster preparedness program to include strict design requirements and development control, construction of buffer protection, soil stabilization and watershed management; (2) on fire and crime/violence, the preparedness program covers enforcement of fire safety code, partnership of police with sectors (youth, parents, school), visitation, awareness program, and response mechanism (toll-free line and emergency patrol vehicles).
- Land use planning was made to be a process which included detailed analysis of natural systems and environment, testing, public consultations, and other related procedures.

Open Forum

(General comments made by participants):

1. From the presentation shared on the Bhutan experience, it appears that traditional planning has not yet been effective in dealing with the scale required for various safety issues. Even though some municipalities have land use planning in place, as in the case of the Philippines (ex. considering its higher risks of flooding), often these plans are not put into effective direct practice when it is necessary. Bhutan must be able to cascade or share their approach in land use planning to make it effective for their situation.



2. Urban planning is land-based, rather than ecosystem-based, which should be more holistic than fragmented. There is a need to look into our whole paradigm of development---can we undo what has been destroyed?
3. The Safer Cities Programme was able to reduce vulnerabilities within its frameworks.
4. One key message of the session is “What can be the best entry point in dealing with urban safety?” As in the case of Paraguay, fire was the entry point in tackling other risks.
5. Urban safety in urban planning needs to be brought into mainstream.
6. Need for legal improvement, that is, institutions to be built and laws to be passed to fight organized crime and to safeguard the public.
7. Community policing as a strategy demonstrated by Dhaka with its successful community empowerment or its creation of partnership with communities.
8. Enforcement obligations of police have nothing to do with the lack of laws.
9. Often quite inadequate laws on domestic violence and other related women issues. Need for advocacy work and training on gender issues in a balance way- at times when women’s rights are advocated, it creates negativity from men.
10. In the Philippines, LGUs are not able to implement safety measures, for example, street lighting. How can community initiatives be supported?



HIGHLIGHTS OF SESSION 3: INTERESTING PRACTICES ON GOVERNANCE FOR THE URBAN POOR

- A. Governance of Urban Safety: Lessons Learned from Bogota
- Why some societies make disastrous decisions: failing to anticipate a problem, failing to perceive it, failing to try to solve it, and unsuccessful in resolving it.
 - Bogota's homicides statistics from 1991 to 2006 revealed a gradual decrease owing to a collective capacity for decision-making and implementation due to stakeholders' involvement, development of the rules of the game, multistakeholders' spaces for interaction (meaning, negotiation, discussion, debate, consensus, etc.)
 - Therefore, the governance of urban safety response lies primarily in collective decision-making using the process of constant discussion where contributions of various groups are made, such that the approach leads to problem solving.



- B. Slum Police Panchayat
- An innovative concept of community policing in slum areas in Mumbai established through a partnership between police and slum residents towards sustainable collaboration. Composed of police and representatives of slum dwellers who are jointly responsible for policing a particular slum area, resolving problems to prevent them from growing into crimes, and maintain law and order.
 - It has a structure in the form of a committee, the roles of the membership are defined; it has a workplace right in the community; it has a process of deliberating and recording every case it deals with and the regularity of committee meetings/hearings (weekly and daily, respectively) for immediate resolution of cases without even bringing complainants to police station.
 - Benefits gained: community members work as volunteers, resources needed are few, confidence in police is built, and encourages community participation in policing.
- C. Improving Public Places in Phnom Penh
- With a total of 30 public spaces transformed into parks, public safety has largely improved giving the citizenry these benefits:
 - Youth has engaged more in socio-cultural activities
 - Created that sense of security among residents, particularly among women
 - Increased income of urban poor folks who work as street vendors
 - Friendly and conducive environment that helps reduce violence and crime



Open Forum

Comments made by Participants:

1. Community workers of Panchayat Police are working as volunteers.
2. Continuity of volunteerism as a crime prevention strategy.
3. There are other community issues, as in health and sanitation, education, livelihood, etc.
4. The example of Slum Police Panchayat can possibly be copied by other cities considering that its implementation in other parts of Mumbai is in the pipeline.



HIGHLIGHTS OF SESSION 4: MARIKINA SITE VISIT

- The tour covered the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), Dutch Olandes, and the Public Safety Center in Industrial Valley Complex; the see-through fences of Marikina Public Schools; the Marikina River Park; the Central Command System of the Rescue 161 at the Justice Building in the Public Safety Center; and the Public Services Center housing the Impounding, CEMO, Engineering and the Central Warehouse. The participants were very interested in the treatment facility which collects the wastewater from the sewers and the river which are treated in the plant and reused for various purposes. The group also stopped at the Public Safety Center in IVC which houses the Barangay Hall, Barangay Gym, Bantay Bayan Office, and a Rescue 161 command center which is one of the four emergency response bases scattered all over the city. It then proceeded to the Public Safety Center where they were shown the operation of the central rescue communication and command center where all calls to the hotline 161 are received and farmed-out to the community-based command centers for appropriate response. Aside from emergency response, the Rescue 161 also provides information pertaining to passability of road networks during typhoons and water level of the river. Last stop was the Central Warehouse at the Public Services Center which operates under the General Services Office and uses an online inventory system for warehousing. The group is supposed to see other program areas such as the relocation site in Camacho, the Road Dike and the alarm system along the riverpark but the guides decided to cut the tour on account of the heavy rain.
- It was emphasized that Marikina is strengthening its disaster preparedness and response program since the city is likely to be hit by another major flooding (similarly or worse than its experience from typhoon Ketsana, with the local name Ondoy) and in preparation for the anticipated 7.2 magnitude earthquake that may hit Metro Manila anytime according to experts. Said earthquake is expected to separate Marikina and Pasig from the rest of Metro Manila so immediate preparations are needed to cushion the probable effect of this calamity.
- The delegates were concerned about evacuation practices by the city which was explained by Dr. Jenny Fernando, former head of Marikina Rescue 161, using the experience of the city during the typhoon Ondoy. The rehabilitation program of Marikina was efficient and prompt but the systems for preparedness for typhoons and other calamities needs to be enhanced in order to save more lives in the future.





HIGHLIGHTS OF SESSION 5: TOOLS AND INNOVATIONS FOR IMPROVING URBAN SAFETY

- A. Urban Safety Toolkit for Asia and the Pacific
- A resource toolkit that includes training modules which is actually patterned after one type that has an African focus. It is right now on revision stage, thus, sample pages were provided for participants' review and feedback.
 - Part of the revision would be to include case studies and good practices in urban safety, other tools and exercises, and interventions like conflict mediation and safety audits, on specific vulnerable groups, as with women, children.
 - The toolkit is, in a way, an instrument for capacitating actors in urban safety work and advocacy.
- B. Findings from Women's Safety Audit in Delhi
- The safety audit was used as a methodology to identify factors the safety of women or the lack of it. It covered lower and middle income classes, resettlement areas, markets, university, and other public areas, and involved communities and organizations to understand their perception of safety.
 - The audit was conducted to address the lack of data owing to the reality that violence against women is not often reported. It is a fact that Delhi is known to have among the highest rates of crime against women in its country and has a reputation of public violence against women.
 - Women's safety is made as an entry point for safe city program.
 - Survey initially done with 1000 women and enlarged to cover 5000 which included men. Its purpose was to look at the actual levels of violence and fear of violence.
 - Some findings: the need for (1) infrastructure like street lighting, pavement, signages, (2) public toilets, (3) safe public transportation, (4) safe pedestrian subways, (5) better basic service delivery.
 - Some learnings included physical factors affecting safety like lack of proper sidewalks, public spaces are generally male dominated, trivialization of sexual harassment, lack of public support.
 - Some issues raised: increasing inequality between women in gated communities who are given protection but not those who work there, age as a vulnerable factor, expanding stakeholders and their roles, problem of health and sanitation in resettlement areas (the burden of sanitation is on women).
 - How to address safety: urban design and planning, good governance, policing and law enforcement, education, community actions and organizing.
- C. Analysis of Urban Safety Situation in Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)
- Analysis done was based on: population statistics; impact of armed conflict; other security problems like terrorism, crimes; poverty situation; poor delivery of government services; natural hazards and destruction of ecosystem.
 - The foregoing situation, particularly the ongoing war, has resulted to the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in host communities, burdening the latter with the daily life



requirements of the citizenry, not to mention that same areas are also confronted by natural hazards.

- The presence of IDPs in host communities has increased urban violence and the rate of crimes.
- LGUs have further weakened their capacity to respond to the needs of both the native citizenry and the IDPs.

D. Workshop: On the Toolkit

- Guide questions in group discussion: (1) What are the challenges in terms of starting initiatives? (2) How can the toolkit facilitate your effort to start these initiatives?
- Consolidated responses: On challenges---(1) how to get the stakeholders to participate, (2) resistance to culture change, gender issue, (3) lack of resources and logistics, (4) legislations to implement safety measures, (5) how to use media for awareness-raising and education to capacitate communities, (6) inadequacies or gaps, (7) creating partnerships and alliance building, (8) definitions of roles, (9) coordination of all players, (10) migration to urban areas, (11) resettlement areas, (12) IDPs, (13) insufficient support, (14) narrow definition of safety for the poor, (15) no forum to express issues of the poor, (16) accessibility of facilities and services are not understood by the poor, (17) the poor are not interested in safety, (18) sustainability of interventions, (19) creating enabling environment to empower, (20) review rules of engagement, (21) apathy. On the toolkit---(1) a resource leading to capacity building, (2) provides process of institutionalization to resolve instability of policies/programs, (3) helps create an enabling environment and guides in community empowerment, (4) reviews interventions, (5) defines partners, ownership and interventions, (6) too much work, very academic, may be made adaptable to local level, (7) provide field/case study, (8) make it more attractive to readers, (9) will help mainstream safety by resolving budgetary issues, (10) helps clarify roles, (11) defines strategies, (12) need good indicators.





E. Yumi Lukautim Mosbi

- YLM is a crime reduction program and safety enhancement involving the:
 - community, government, and the private sector. It is based on the strength of partnership among key players and stakeholders, of interactive and consultative processes, and of its action on community needs.
- Its structure is in the form of an Urban Safety Committee composed of
 - representatives from the major actors involved.
- The partnership has evolved programs supporting the needs of the partner
 - communities or sector, as in skills development for the youth and their employment, a program for women and children in crisis, a program on safer transport for women and children, and awareness program.

Question-and-Answer (Q/A) Portion

Points of Discussion

1. Addressing inadequacies in law enforcement
2. Indicators in women's audit
3. Dimensions of conflict considered in the analysis of security conditions
4. Real perception of sense of security
5. Good practices of LGUs in peace initiatives



HIGHLIGHTS OF SESSION 6: THE WAY FORWARD

The succeeding pages are the consolidated group reports made by the participants. It is formatted into an integrated key recommendations clustered according to the areas of Partnership Building, Benchmarking and Monitoring, Training and Capacity Building, and City-to-City Cooperation and Exchanges.



These recommended action plans remain, at this point in time of the conference, as a work in progress. Its finalization shall be made upon the last review of the participants and their submission of additional feedback.

Points of Discussion

1. Sectoral approach to urban safety planning versus a comprehensive plan preparation by a designated single body, the output of which shall be consulted with stakeholders or sectoral representatives.
2. Urban plan is a specific obligation of LGUs.
3. Bringing the safety program to the national level.
4. Making urban safety part of urban planning curriculum.
5. Exploring the term “urban status.” Who can actually demand services?
6. To be cautious on using traditional bodies/approaches in disputes settlement. Oftentimes, traditional groups intervene following their interests.
7. Mainstreaming of urban safety in one major issue.
8. Dealing with backlash/resistance. Perception of unsafety, how should this be addressed?
9. How can Safe City Index be done?



10. Urban safety is key to achieving the MDGs.
11. Supportive community framework.



Recommendations for the regional framework/action plan

Any initiative to improve safety for the urban poor should be driven by a demand from the poor communities themselves. Safety should be seen as a service - it is everyone's right in the city to be safe.

Review policy, legislation dealing with urban safety and others to ensure focus on the urban poor communities. **Need to develop a common understanding on providing safety for the poor.**

Ensure the initiatives to improve safety builds and involves existing structures and elements within the city and the communities, ensuring coordination between key players and key actors.

Should not prescribe any model but develop a modality that would fit a specific context and locality. Successes are context specific, building upon strengths and what works, political governance frameworks are different in different contexts and therefore, safety initiatives need to be adapted.

Partnership building:

Key for successful implementation of safety is the consolidation of partnerships, ensuring the inclusion of all partners and embracing a people-centred approach to safety building on the identified needs.

To ensure meaningful stakeholder participation, there is a need to bring all stakeholders together for dialogue and exchange, both on local and regional level.

National and local government have key roles to play in policy formulation, implementation, and resource mobilisation.

Every sector has a role to play in providing safety for the inhabitants and specifically the poor. Need for a comprehensive overall framework where all sectors should work together.

Building a critical mass of political support/champions in Asia for urban safety and create a movement of mayors and recognise their efforts on urban safety in partnership with poor communities.

Identify champion cities on different aspects of safety

Benchmarking and Monitoring:

Ensure benchmarking by assessing risk in cities prior to interventions and monitor its progress.

Diagnosing the local issues to be able to develop integrated, city-wide frameworks/strategies to ensure safety initiatives.

Development of a safe city index.

Training and Capacity Building:

Components on urban safety can be mainstreamed not only through local and regional training sessions/programmes, but also by organising series of long trainings on various safety themes, not only for professionals but also for local elected bodies.

Develop a set of tools and accompanying training modules.

Include safety in the urban planning curricula

City-to-city Cooperation and Exchanges:

Identification of resource cities.

Exchanges within the region and with other regions. There is a need to share good practices within the country and in the region – some institutions can take the lead e.g. CITYNET, HABITAT and ESCAP.

Identifying a date for a celebration of safety day/week in the Asia Pacific region.

Mainstreaming of urban safety.