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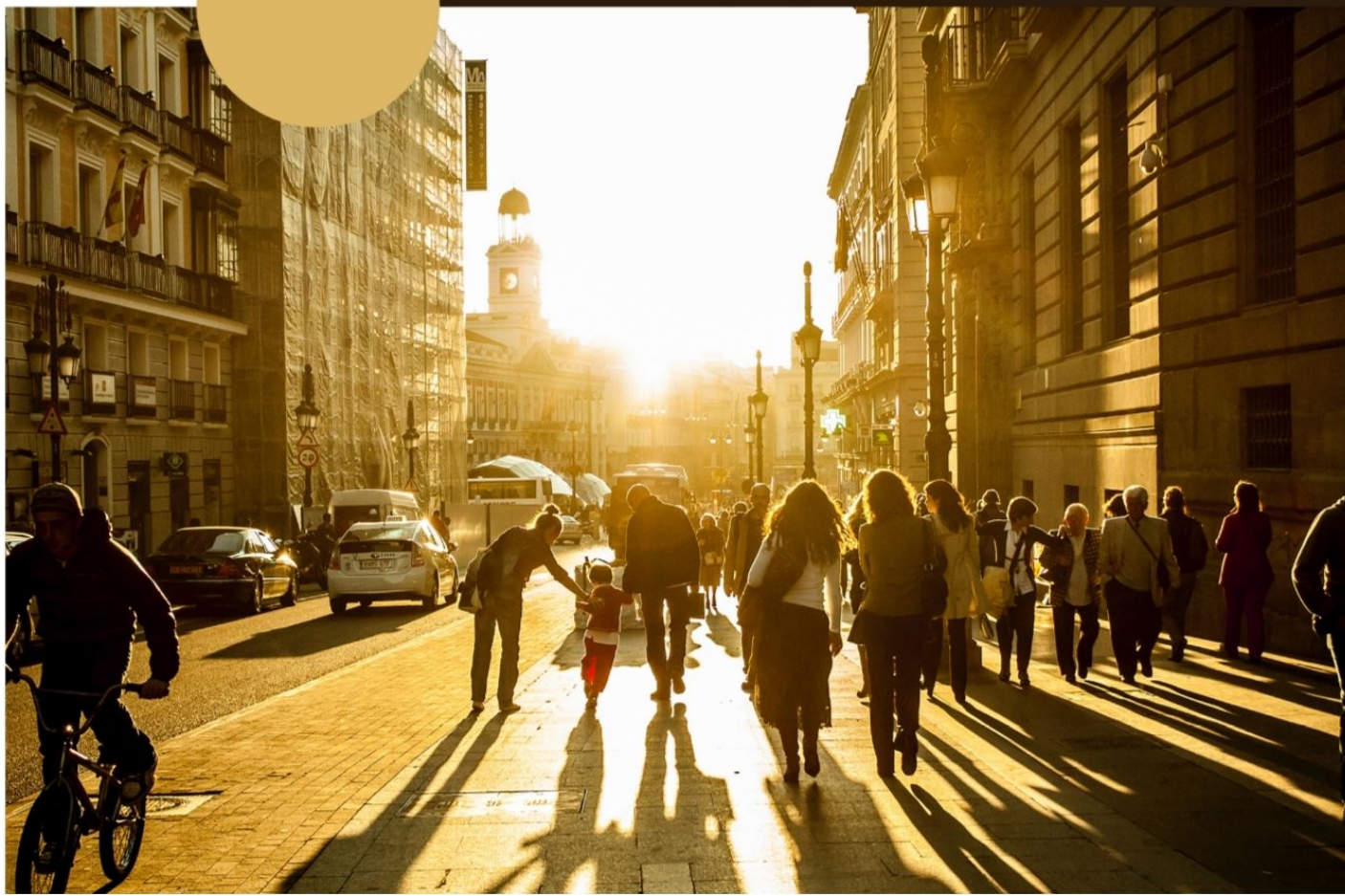
UNHABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Expert Group Meeting on Global Urban Safety Indicators and Monitoring Tool

Madrid, 26, 27 & 28 October 2020

REPORT



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Background

Making cities and human settlements safe is one of the key aspirations for Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The most effective approaches to urban safety and security address the multi-faceted causes of crime and different forms of violence, including gender-based violence and sexual harassment, applying both human and technological responses. This includes improving the local governance of safety and security as a public good through civic participation, place-making, vernacular arts and cultural activities, behavioural change strategies and community development efforts that strengthen local ties and foster civic engagement and collaboration.

The United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements, developed during the last years by UN-Habitat and approved by the General Assembly of United Nations in 2019, provide a standard for how local governments should respond to the challenges of delivering urban safety. They also outline how national and sub-national governments should provide local governments with technical cooperation and assistance. The goal is to build and promote a vision of urban safety and security that makes society more cohesive and improves quality of life for everyone.

For over 25 years, UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme has been a pioneer in the use of indicators to understand and respond to the dynamics of urban safety. UN-Habitat's use of data on public perception (rather than relying only on official statistics) has been especially innovative. A world-class knowledge hub of partners in the Global Network on Safer Cities has incrementally developed to support public policy in this area.

This is why, in October 2020, UN-Habitat gathered a group of experts and practitioners associated with the Urban Safety Monitor, a potential signature open-data initiative. Building on previous experiences and tapping the wealth of technical expertise in the GNSC, the EGM reviewed existing urban safety indicators and surveillance systems, including indicators and surveillance methodology.



The Urban Safety Monitor will harness the power of data (including open data) to strengthen evidence-based policy for reducing urban crime, violence and insecurity and enhancing urban safety for all from multiple points of view. It will drive informed public policymaking and enhance local government accountability at city level; and, by illuminating the interplay between urban risk and resilience (social capital) factors reflected in its reservoir of data, it will expand the stock of knowledge on what makes cities safer for all.

The Urban Safety Monitor will be a self-assessment tool that will allow local governments to peer review each other and, rather than rank cities, it will allow them to benchmark their own progress towards the 2030 goals and targets to make their city safer, promoting good practices and encouraging exchanges.

Summary of interventions

DAY 1 – 26 October 2020

15:30 – 15:45

Welcome - Opening remarks

MC: **Carmen Sánchez-Miranda**, Head of UN Habitat Office in Spain.

Carmen Sánchez-Miranda welcomed the more than forty participants to the first day of the virtual Expert Group Meeting and described the key role of the city of Madrid in the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

- **Rafael Tuts**, Director of the Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat

Rafael Tuts also welcomed participants. He expressed that the knowledge shared in this event and new urban safety development tools will support local government in their quest to develop improved policies as part of the Decade of Action of the SDGs. It will also help participants advance a Safer Cities 2.0 prototype that policymakers can rely on. He concluded by noting that data collection on urban safety in low- and middle-income countries remains relatively weak, hindering the performance of local governments and the ability of civil society to hold governments



accountable. He urged cities to enter into research partnerships with universities to improve in this arena.

- **Begoña Villacis**, Vice-Mayor of Madrid City Council

Begoña Villacis expressed the desire to welcome participants to Madrid in person in the near future. She underlined the importance of the urban point of view in debates about safety and affirmed Madrid's commitment to the summit's goals.

- **Javier Jileta**, Director General for Civil Society Organizations, Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, Mexico.

Javier Jileta thanked the organizers and the participants. He highlighted the need for commitment, political will, and constant reframing when it comes to issues of urban safety. He shared that building safer cities is about more than just indicators and numbers, but a tool for decision-making and figuring out a more effective process for implementation. Learning from experts, he said, is key. He commented on the urban nature of the COVID-19 crisis and on the need to reclaim space to build stronger cities. Safety is not just the lack of crime but also has to do with cities' health and public transportation systems. He concluded by wishing the group a fruitful discussion.



Top Left: **Carmen Sánchez-Miranda**; Top Right: **Javier Jileta**; Bottom Left: **Rafael Tuts**; Bottom Right: **Begoña Villacis**



15:45 – 16:05

Introduction: Implementation of the UN systemwide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements – what measuring implementation means for Cities and states

- **Ismael Del Toro**, Mayor of Guadalajara, Mexico

Ismael Del Toro expressed the need to approach urban issues from the perspective of the citizen. The collaboration with UN Habitat, past successful experiences, and expert advising, have allowed Guadalajara to design improved public policies for urban safety. Strategic actions have been implemented in diverse neighborhoods across Guadalajara, in realms such as culture, sports, and police proximity. He concluded by highlighting the important of citizen confidence in government and safety authorities, appreciating the support Guadalajara has received in this mission.

- **Stefanie Chetty**, Director of Urban Development, Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), South Africa

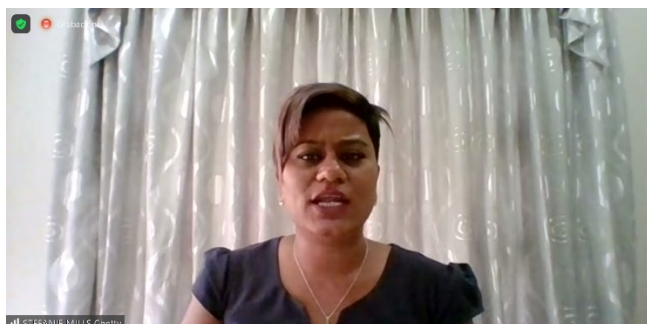
Stefanie Chetty described South Africa's Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), a policy and tool to address urbanization through spatial transformation. It drives social and economic development while also working to protect the environment and promote urban safety. A key idea is to connect and coordinate cities and towns across the country, focusing on inclusion and access, spatial integration, growth, and governance, steering urban growth to a sustainable growth model. There are three cross-cutting priorities in the IUDF: urban resilience, urban safety, and urban-rural interdependence, all of which are linked to the New Urban Agenda. Safety is essential for creating spaces where citizens take full advantage of economic and cultural opportunities. The IUDF seeks to bring in UN Safer City Guidelines into its framework, including the peer review process. South Africa is contributing to Urban Safety through events, cooperation, and a virtual festival. She concluded by expressing her hope that these conversations will lead to an inclusive monitoring tool that can facilitate further cooperation across countries.

- **Elizabeth Johnston**, Director General, European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS)

Elizabeth Johnston began recognizing that the most difficult part of the SDGs and the safer guidelines for cities is how they are implemented. From over fifteen years of safety audits, EFUS



has seen that urban safety extends beyond crime and violence reduction. It needs to encompass a broad range of quality-of-life issues. She shared four propositions: 1) Invest more time and energy into producing qualitative measures on the fear of crime; 2) Improve the localization of data from national institutions and resolve discrepancies from different data sources; 3) Share the information and allow greater access of existing data; and 4) Backing the systematic support of professionals at the local level with training and resources to analyze the data that has been collected and shared, including peer to peer networks.



Left: **Stefanie Chetty**; Right: **Ismael Del Toro**

16:05 – 16:55

Session 1: Violence reduction and urban safety approaches: Key perspectives informing Future of Safety approaches in Cities (Safer Cities 2.0)

Theme Introduction and Moderation: **Dr. Barbara Holtmann** Director, Fixed Africa, Johannesburg / Technical Advisor, GNSC

- **Robert Muggah**, Director Igarape Institute/ Pathfinders for Peace, New York

Robert Muggah highlighted that the goal of the meeting is to set up a standardised data collection tool to help benchmarking performance on delivery of the guidelines, and to shift behavior towards more inclusive crime prevention. He noted that metrics are always political, and there will always be resistance, but they are also very powerful, especially if they are backed with resources and tools. He pointed out that success cannot be defined just by the number of people arrested, although that is often how crime is measured. Some metrics are easier to capture, but they are not the best metrics or sufficient to understand safety. The *Peace in Our Cities* Initiative, a



resolution to halve violence in cities by 2030, sets a series of “process metrics” of success that give a better picture of performance on the guidelines. He shared that when it comes to data, there are several important factors: 1) a minimum set of metrics, rather than too many; 2) how to make the data comparable; 3) whether data is inward facing or public facing; and 4) how user friendly can the system be. He concludes by recommending the prototyping of a very basic tool that is credible, and then building out from there.

- **Irvin Waller**, University of Ottawa

Irvin Waller began by highlighting several key aspects of the UN Systemwide Guidelines that are sometimes overlooked. These include the reduction of crime, violence and fear, through integrated policy approaches to urban safety and security, and a solid knowledge base of good practices and effective interventions supported by adequate resources. The Urban Safety Monitor is a joint dashboard that will measure progress on seven essentials for success. These essentials have helped cities like Bogotá, Coahuila, Boston, and Glasgow reduce violence by 50 percent. He concluded by stating the need to emphasize the benefits of these actions, which save lives and contribute to economic growth.

- **Rachel Locke**, University of San Diego, USA (Peace in Our Cities Campaign)

First, Rachel Locke recognized that data collection is not just a technical exercise, but an exercise in opening up to scrutiny and recognizing that there are trade-offs for politicians. Publishing data and transparency can also be mobilizing, helping to advance progress and show that change is possible. *Peace in Our Cities* is a network of 17 cities around the world that wants to encourage bolder action based on evidence that is known. The best way to lower violence and keep it down is through balanced and evidence-informed actions. She highlighted several key points: 1) the data must be accompanied by a “narrative of imperative,” avoiding the normalization of things like domestic violence; 2) incident data and systemic data are both essential, investing in both

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