



DIALOGUE 6 WUF 7 CONCEPT NOTE

A SAFE CITY AS A JUST AND EQUITABLE CITY

Objectives of the Dialogue

Recent approaches to urban safety have highlighted the importance of focusing on the individual and social development of the most excluded groups in urban contexts as a way of promoting positive change in cities. Capitalizing on this trend, the debates in this dialogue will focus on how (and through which means) urban safety programmes can positively affect the overall development of excluded urban groups, such as women, adolescent girls, children, etc. as well as make them the catalysts of change in their own cities.

The aim is to provide a forum for discussion on cutting-edge competencies, methodologies, and programmes that link the development of marginalized groups to urban safety. To this end, the dialogue aims to:

1. Highlight **innovative thought and experiences** related to urban development which have positively impacted on the safety of the most excluded and vulnerable groups and made their cities and urban living more equitable, having engaged them as agents of change;
2. Discuss and forward original programming, skills and methodologies which focus specifically on the most vulnerable and excluded urban population;
3. Explore and encourage **multi-level networks and partnerships** interested on improving urban development through the engagement of the most marginalized urban population as key agents of change in the process and groups as central cornerstones of change in cities;
4. Identify the roles of the different **levels of government and legislative mechanisms** that promote a safe and just city for the most marginalized.

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Introduction of the topic

The growth of cities has given considerable profile and visibility on the sustainability of our future. On the one hand, cities may offer increased opportunities: access to better services, employment, education, social development, and vibrant streets and public spaces. On the other, they also present critical challenges: social exclusion, rising crime and violence, discrimination and growing inequalities.

For some time now, both scholarly and development agendas have acknowledged that different urban populations experience cities diversely, especially the most marginalized urban groups – such as gender and ethnic minorities, slum and street dwellers, the elderly, people with disability and other economically and politically excluded groups. While the needs and rights of vulnerable and excluded groups may be recognised as specific issues in research, policy and planning, they are often ignored in practice. Hence, the urgent need of devising new strategies that are not only geared towards the inclusion and development of those groups but that also intend to make them the catalysts of change in their own cities.

This dialogue proposes that cities can reduce inequalities by encouraging the engagement and participation of the most vulnerable and excluded groups of the population in urban safety and by ensuring that they have access to the wider opportunities and benefits cities may offer. In order to promote a safer city for all, urban programs must have a clear rights-based focus.

Linkages with Post-2015 Development Agenda and Habitat III

The dialogue will contribute to the Post-2015 agenda by proposing principles and practices that promote a more integrated, equitable, balanced and multi-cultural urban development. Contributing to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 agenda, there are ongoing debates on whether to establish a separate indicator reflecting security/reduction of violence and crime or whether to be mainstreamed in all the other SDGs. Habitat III will be the first major conference after the SDGs' adoption and will

be an opportunity to define the road map to achieving the related goals and launching the New Urban Agenda. As such, this will offer a unique opportunity to discuss the role of the local public sector and urbanization in achieving development goals. The dialogue will also take the opportunity to focus on the development of the UN Guidelines on Safer Cities, which are to be adopted during the Habitat III conference.

Key interrogatives

- What does equity and safety mean for the most excluded and vulnerable urban groups, such as women, adolescent girls, children, youth etc.?
- How can the most marginalized urban groups trigger positive change and what are their roles and responsibilities in creating safer and more equitable cities?
- How can local governance be improved and leaders be empowered and work with other actors needed to build a safer and more just city?
- How can local and national law, legislation and policy reflect the values of a safe, just and equitable city?
- What are the 5 or 10 non-negotiable elements required to realize a safe, just and equitable city?

References

1. Short informative reading:

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2. On Safer Cities

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- Silliman, S. (. (2011). The Local-to-Local Dialogue Resource Manual: A guide for grassroots women-led engagement. New York: Huairou Commission.
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4. On gender-sensitive development approaches that impact urban safety:

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5. On the links between promoting a safer city for women and adolescent girls and how it affects the overall safety of the city:

- Viswanath, K.; Husain, S.; & Lambrick, M. (2013) Tackling Gender Exclusion: Experiences from the Gender Inclusive Cities Programme. Montreal: Canada.

6. On women and adolescent girls' access to public spaces and economic opportunities:

- Travers, K., Khosla, P., & Dhar, S. (eds) (2011). Gender and Essential Services in Low-Income Communities. Montreal: Women and Cities International.
- Chen, M. (2012). The Informal Economy: Definitions, Theories and Policies. Cambridge (MA): WIEGO. (see especially Chapter V 'Comprehensive Policy Approach)
- Purushothaman, P.; Silliman, S.; Basu, B & Pillay, S. (2011) Grassroots Women and Decentralised Governance Change through Partnership. New York: Huairou Commission. (See especially Chapter 2 and 4)

7. On tracking the safety levels of women and adolescent girls in cities and urban centers:

- Viswanatha, K. (ed) (2011) Tools for Gathering Information about Women's Safety and Inclusion in Cities -Experiences from the Gender Inclusive Cities Programme. Montreal: Canada.