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## **Safer Cities in the Asia Pacific Region**

### **UN-Habitat mission to Korea**

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UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme tackles urban crime and violence. It aims to improve the livability of cities and quality of life for all urban residents through a multi-level government and multi-sectorial approach. In 2012, UN-Habitat launched the Global Network on Safer Cities (GNSC) to further consolidate and systematize the experiences on safer cities with a dimension of enhancing structured dialogue and ownership among cities and partners of the safer cities model approach. Subsequently, a Global Steering Committee of the GNSC was established in 2013, and the Mayor of Seoul was appointed as a regional-co-chair representing the Asia Pacific Region.

Framed by the mandate of the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) and CityNet in the follow up to the Mayor's appointment, the Director of the UN-Habitat Programme Division accompanied by the Safer Cities Programme team undertook a scoping mission from June 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, to Seoul towards the development of a regional strategy and the establishment of a regional network on safer cities. UN-Habitat, SMG, CityNet and their partners are working together to improve urban safety in Asian cities. Seoul has successfully implemented strategies and best practice projects related to urban safety. By sharing its experience, SMG is helping to accelerate progress in the development of the safer cities approach. This will promote further cooperation among CityNet members and support the development of a regional strategy for urban safety in the Asia Pacific Region.

When the delegation of UN-Habitat visited Seoul in June 2015, SMG presented selected projects and policies related to crime prevention and shared its gained experience on urban safety. With its innovative approach to tackle urban crime, Seoul is leading the field of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). The UN-Habitat delegation accompanied by SMG and CityNet visited Yeomni-dong in the Mapo district. A neighborhood characterized by various types of low-rise multi-unit housing and narrow alleys that stretch over the hilly terrain. After the area had been designated for redevelopment, house owners had stopped investing in their property which led to a downgrading and rising number of violent crimes. In response to that SMG and the local community have successfully implemented one of the first CPTED projects in Seoul.

In the neighborhood's community center, the project coordinator explained how solutions to crime problems have been developed and implemented with and by the community rather than for them. One collaborative activity resulted in the Salt Way – a fitness circuit that winds about 1.7 kilometers through the hilly neighborhood. The Salt Way, named after the neighborhood's history related to salt trade, is well lit, attractively designed and equipped with innovative security tools. The circuit attracts additional pedestrians and athletes, which improves safety (eyes on the streets). Furthermore, numbered yellow utility poles and maps provide an orientation system that makes it easier to report a crime and call the police to specific location. During a tour along the Salt Way the coordinator showed some of the project's innovations such as safe houses, improved CCTV and street lighting as well as colorful public spaces and alleys which had been designed together with the residents. In order to improve the neighborhood's safety some community members agreed to install IP security cameras on their properties, which are a much more cost effective way of surveillance than CCTV. The Yeomni-dong case shows that the key to success of the CPTED approach is not just about reducing crime but about building community.

As a vast majority of violence and crime is targeted at women, SMG has launched the Making Seoul a Safer City For Women Project, which includes the Comprehensive Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence. Making Seoul a Safer City for Women is based on three pillars: Firstly, improving awareness through educational programs and campaigns to prevent violence against women, secondly, creating and extending

anti-violence networks citywide, and thirdly, integrating a one-stop system from crime reporting to victim protection. The program is overlapping with SMG's CPTED initiatives on the neighborhood level. It involves local initiatives such as the Home Patrol Service for women of low-income households, safe houses, volunteer neighborhood guards, and a safety escort service for women who return home from work late at night.

SMG is ready to share its knowledge and experience in improving urban safety. To enable other cities to benefit from Seoul's experience, SMG has partnered with UN-Habitat and CityNet. Together they are aiming to develop a regional strategy for urban safety and a regional network for safer cities in the Asia Pacific Region. As a first step UN-Habitat, SMG and CityNet are jointly planning a Safer Cities Knowledge Exchange Seminar for Asian cities at the end of 2015. This will provide an excellent opportunity for local governments to exchange knowledge and share their experience in improving urban safety in the Asia Pacific Region. The seminar will strengthen the existing cooperation among CityNet members and support the establishment of a regional network for safer cities in conjunction with a regional strategy that enables the replication of best practice projects in the Asia Pacific Region.

Beyond their existing joint activities UN-Habitat, SMG and CityNet are steadily looking for ways to enhance and further develop their cooperation in the future. UN-Habitat is ready to support SMG's endeavor towards dissemination of Seoul's knowledge and best practice related to urban safety globally.

*Seoul is giving a sentiment of security to its population, particularly to women who are feeling safe in the city. I hope this will inspire and enable other city officials to take action and improve urban safety in the Asia Pacific Region.*

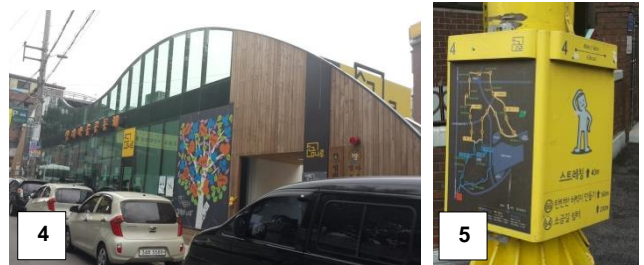
(Dr. Alioune Badiane, Director of UN-Habitat Programmes)

Initial ideas on how UN-Habitat could support SMG's activities on the global level include:

- Promoting Seoul's actions related to urban safety to the international community through
  - endorsing Seoul's city-wide Comprehensive Safety Plan as a best practice strategy;
  - document the city's good practices implementation such as the Women Friendly City Initiative and CPTED projects on the neighborhood level.
- The establishment of Seoul as a regional and global knowledge hub for safer cities and promotion of Seoul as an international training center of excellence
- Grow a regional and international network for safer cities and contribute to the world's major initiatives like the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) in 2016.

UN-Habitat has identified great potential in Seoul to advance within the Safer Cities Programme, as the city can reach out to other important organizations working in field of safe and sustainable urban development, crime prevention, and women's safety. UN-Habitat is convinced that under the leading initiative of SMG a consortium of partners such as CityNet, UCLG (Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments), KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency), and other public and private stakeholders can be built. Such a platform would also be able to support cities to plan, innovate, and implement projects to catalyze change; assist cities to understand financing sources and models to execute projects and to monitor and evaluate for continuous improvement.

**Annex: UN-Habitat delegation, SMG and CityNet visit CPTED project in Yeomni-dong**



1 safe house; 2 property protection through an artistic wall instead of ugly barbwire; 3 UN-Habitat delegation, project coordinator, SMG and CityNet on the Salt Way; 4 community center 5 map for orientation on utility pole; 6 discussion at the community center; 7 work out station on the Salt Way