‘THE ROLE OF CITIES TO REDUCE AND PREVENT VIOLENCE: A CASE STUDY OF NAIROBI CITY COUNTY’

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SAFARI PARK HOTEL

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REMARKS BY THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR MR. JONATHAN MUEKE

NAIROBI CITY COUNTY
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome each of you to the City County of Nairobi.

Crime and violence present a major obstacle to the achievement of sustainable urban development in cities as well as being a negative influence on urban communities’ abilities to consistently uplift their social and economic status.

I am happy to be here today to share with you Nairobi’s experience in crime prevention and urban safety. Our lessons provide some insight into the linkages between crime & violence on the one hand and sustainable urban development especially in context of implementation of urban safety and crime prevention initiatives.

**Can Cities play a crucial role in crime reduction & prevention?**

Cities are the closest level of government to the citizenry and therefore are in unique positions to initiate and actively participate in local crime prevention. Indeed many of the day –to- day crime prevention activities are inherent in the services performed by the County Authority.

**What has Nairobi done in regards to crime reduction and prevention?**

Nairobi’s approach to building urban safety was through developing participatory crime-prevention interventions involving city communities that would reduce urban crime and improve the quality of life.

The City undertook a citywide crime survey in 2001 with technical support from UN-Habitat to see what efforts could be put to revitalize the city that had lost its competitiveness and business edge.

This led to the formulation of the City’s Crime Prevention and Urban Safety Strategy which outlined a series of interventions under four key pillars namely:

- Support to groups at risk including women and youth,
- Crime prevention through environmental design,
- Enforcement of city laws and by-laws and
- Community empowerment.

The City has through an **inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary approach** institutionalized the promotion of safety and crime prevention within its operations and service delivery.

The interventions undertaken contributed to the reduction of crime in the city, especially the regeneration of the Central Business District as an economic hub through the installation of street and security lights, rehabilitation of service lanes, pedestrianization of streets creating safer and pedestrian-friendly walkways and rehabilitation of the city’s public transport termini and commuter bus shelters.

Another key outcome was the formation of the Safer Nairobi Initiative as a multi-stakeholder platform which encouraged various partnerships and coalitions around issues of urban safety.

**What is Nairobi City County currently doing?**

Safety and security is a priority on the City County government’s agenda. We are developing and implementing programs targeting the risk factors contributing to the emergence of crime and social exclusion.

1. The City is comprised of a primarily youthful population, about 60% of whom is unemployed and live in informal settlements. This increases their vulnerabilities as both perpetrators and victims of crime.

   We are determined to mobilize young people around developmental issues and some of our interventions include;

   i. The establishment of a **Youth Oversight Board** as a way of involving the youth in decision making through developing policies that address their specific needs. Made up of diverse young people representing various interests and spheres, this team advises the County administration on how best to address youth issues.

   ii. Partnerships with various organizations to address youth unemployment that has been identified as a key cause of crime. Examples of this include:
- Collaborating with the National government through the Ministry of Planning and Devolution to train youth in the Kibera Slum Upgrading program that aims to **empower youth with entrepreneurial skills** in betterment of the community;

  **Training of 100 youth on apprentice skills** such painting in partnership with Sadolin Paints Company as a way of economically empowering the youth with new skills

- Designing programs and projects under the Nairobi Metropolitan Services Improvement Program (NaMSIP) and Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Program (KISIP) to incorporate **provision of labour by the youth**. For instance construction of Outering Road funded by the African Development Bank has a component of **skills development for the youth** from the locality of the implementation of the project.

- Development and refurbishment of **Retail Markets** as trading facilities for informal traders, 75% of whom are youth, through NaMSIP.

iii. Promotion of **sports, arts and culture** as a way of engaging with the youth through the formation of the Wasanii SACCO as a bloc to **develop TV and film production**; support for youth-led crafts, fairs and events; allowing young people access to the city’s public spaces for sports and performances as well as planning an annual Cultural Festival to be held every December that will give the youth a platform to showcase their talents, sell their wares and celebrate culture.

iv. The county has operationalized the statutory **requirement of 30 % procurement and tendering contracts** be set aside for youth, women and persons living with disabilities.

v. In a bid to improve its capacity to address issues of gender related violence, the County is committed to upgrading existing facilities & establishing gender violence recovery centres and safe spaces for women & young girls.
2. **Infrastructure investment** in the city including the construction of roads, functional sewer systems and lighting directly contributes to improvement of safety and security.

   - Dark, unlit public spaces are a fertile ground for crime and insecurity and in order to stem this, we have in collaboration with the national government demonstrated our commitment to light the city by setting aside this Financial Year, **Kshs 1.2 Billion from the National government and Kshs. 560 million from Nairobi County’s budget**, with more attention placed on the informal settlements.

   Under a World Bank supported programme **NaMSIP, we have 2Million $** set aside for lighting the city as well.

   We have also installed 42 number CCTV cameras at various spots within the CBD to monitor crime with plans to replicate this across the city.

   - Through **Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Programme** (KISIP), the County aims to promote urban safety & empower communities living in informal settlements through the improvement of infrastructure and trading facilities.

   - The County government is undertaking a **Public Spaces Rehabilitation Program** aimed at providing better urban parks & recreational facilities with the inclusion of the citizen in the governance and management of the spaces, with our pilot project at Jeevanjee Gardens in the CBD. We intend to promote our citizens’ pride in use of the available public spaces and making them the heartbeat of the city.

3. In order to ensure a sustainable response to crime and violence, the County government has been focusing on the citizen as key actors in crime prevention.

   - Leveraging on the social capital inherent in its citizens, the county is tapping into local knowledge of the strong neighbourhood associations. The County is has enacted the **Nairobi City County Community and Neighbourhood**
Initiatives Facilitation and Regulation Bill (2014) that is aimed at giving statutory recognition to community and neighbourhood initiatives in complimenting county government service delivery and to enable structured cooperation between the county government, residents and business groups.

- The County is reaching out to vulnerable communities in informal settlements through the Good School, Good Neighborhood Initiative which seeks to use the school as entry point to promote safe and harmonious neighborhoods. This program is currently being piloted in Ngunyumu Primary School in Korogocho.

- The County government has also been collaborating with the private sector to improve the infrastructure in schools within informal settlements such as Mathare and Olympic in Kibera.

4. On the policy front, the County has just completed preparation of the Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Master Plan (NIUPLAN). The plan provides an integrated framework based on a comprehensive and holistic view of urban development. A fundamental aspect of the plan vision is to have an inclusive city which ensures spatial and social equity.

CONCLUSION

For the city to develop informed interventions, we have commissioned its second Crime and Victimization Survey to determine the status of crime and come up with strategies and interventions which will be mainstreamed in the operations of the county for implementation.

The City appreciates that it must take a proactive role in addressing the safety concerns of Nairobi through a coordinated and comprehensive approach as well as through delivering on its promise of a better city and better life for the 4 million Nairobi residents.