

10. PUBLIC POLICY OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL APPROACHES

Policy makers have several complementary approaches at their disposal with which to address crime and violence. Sector-specific approaches—such as criminal justice, public health, and conflict transformation/human rights—have a role to play, as do cross-sectoral approaches, such as crime prevention through environmental design and citizen security. The criminal justice approach is the most widely known and used, but it does have limitations and should not be the sole approach employed. Public health approaches are appropriate for addressing youth and gender-based violence, and crime prevention through environmental design has the potential to rapidly lower crime in specific locations.

In terms of policy making at the regional level, CARICOM has taken several important steps to deal with crime and violence, focusing on those issues which transcend national boundaries; perhaps the most important has been the creation of the Regional Task Force on Crime and Violence. At the national level, the formulation of national plans to address crime and violence is crucial, since these plans allow for cross-sectoral collaboration and promote serious discussions on priorities in resource allocation. There are multiple entry points for public policy to reduce crime and violence. The key is to select policies and interventions that have a proven track record of success or that are extremely promising. A mix of highly cost effective long-run approaches (including investment in prevention programs with young children and families) can be combined with other interventions (such as situational crime prevention) that can provide quick impacts on crime.

10.1 This chapter provides an overview of sector and cross-sectoral approaches to crime and violence prevention in the Caribbean. It then makes the case that crime and violence are an issue of economic development for the region and that an integrated, multi-sectoral response (encompassing more than the criminal justice system) is needed. Finally, the chapter offers some preliminary recommendations at the national and regional levels.

SECTORAL AND CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACHES

10.2 In the Caribbean and most other regions, efforts to prevent violence have focused on urban violence (except in post-conflict situations). Table 10.1 summarizes these efforts, distinguishing between sector-specific approaches (such as criminal justice, public health, and conflict transformation and human rights) and cross-sectoral approaches (such as crime prevention through environmental design, community-driven development and citizen security), and identifying the goals, types of violence addressed and typical interventions for each (Monseret al., 2005).

Sector-specific approaches

10.3 Among sector-specific approaches, the *criminal justice approach* is perhaps the best-known; it tries to reduce crime and violence through higher arrest rates, higher conviction rates, and longer sentences. Criminologists often distinguish between deterrence effects (dissuading potential criminals from committing crimes) and incapacitation effects (preventing criminals

from committing crimes because they are imprisoned). The criminal justice approach aims to reduce crime through both deterrence and incapacitation effects.

10.4 The criminal justice approach—which involves work with police, prosecutors, the judiciary, and prisons—is favored by politicians who want to generate rapid decreases in crime and violence. Police and judicial reform is urgent both to reduce impunity and address deeper issues involving justice, corruption, and human rights abuses; impunity plays a large role in promoting economically-motivated crime in the Caribbean and elsewhere. In the corrections area, serious reforms and additional investment are needed if prisons are to have any prospect of rehabilitating inmates, instead of just preventing them from committing crimes during their stays in prison.

10.5 At the same time, the criminal justice approach has serious limitations:

- To the extent that police and judicial institutions are inefficient and in need of reform, the injection of additional resources without reform may not produce the desired results.
- In the case of police, there is some evidence from the United States that simply putting more uniformed officers on the street does not reduce crime. Such officers must be in the right place and at the right time, which requires some sophistication in detecting crime patterns and allocating police resources (Felson 1994).
- There is a risk in pursuing a piecemeal approach where individual institutions (police, judiciary, prosecutors, prisons) are reformed one at a time. As Chapter 8 makes clear, the various institutions in the criminal justice system must be aligned with one another. Thus, systemic reform is generally more desirable than piecemeal reform.
- Other types of investment—focused on prevention rather than control—are generally more *cost-effective* in reducing crime than investments focusing on crime control (Greenwood, 1998; USDOJ, 2004; Sansfaçon et al, 1999; World Bank, 2006b).

10.6 The *public health approach* is another sector-specific approach. Often called the epidemiological approach, it involves four steps: defining the problem and collecting reliable data, identifying causes and risk factors for violent behavior, developing and implementing interventions, and analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of violence prevention interventions (Mercy et al., 1993; WHO, 2004). In the Caribbean, the public health approach has been used with an emphasis on youth violence as well as injury prevention. One example of this approach is the Injury Surveillance System that was created by the Ministry of Health in Jamaica.

10.7 The public health approach has the great advantage of being evidence-based. Interventions are tailored to address risk factors that are most important in a given locale, and there is significant emphasis on evaluating the impacts of the interventions. The one disadvantage of this approach is that many of its most important interventions—such as programs to reduce unintended pregnancies and to promote early childhood development and parental training—may have payoffs in terms of reduced violence only after some time has passed. But not all public health-inspired interventions have delayed effects: limiting the

availability of alcohol and providing recreational and mentoring programs to remain in school, for example, may all produce relatively quick impacts.¹

10.8 The *conflict transformation and human rights approach* promotes nonviolent conflict resolution through mediation, negotiation, and enforcement of human rights. Often used in post-conflict settings, it has also been employed by NGOs working to promote enfranchisement of marginal communities and their citizens. Another innovative option is community peace-building efforts which directly involve citizens; according to Harriott (2004), popular involvement at the community level can strengthen the moral authority of the state's control institutions, as well as improve their effectiveness. This approach also focuses on the state's role in ensuring citizens' rights to be free from victimization and the threat of violence (Moser et al., 2005). This approach is employed by the Dispute Resolution Foundation in Jamaica, which works with warring factions in communities to mediate, establish ceasefires and community codes of conduct, and teach conflict resolution skills.

Cross-sectoral approaches

10.9 The *crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)* and the *urban renewal approach* are based on the premise that characteristics of the physical environment influence the amount of crime that occurs—and thus, that crime can be reduced by modifying the physical environment to make it more difficult and risky (and less rewarding) for potential criminals to commit crime. This approach involves interventions in the planning, design, and management phases of urban development projects (Moser et al., 2005). Importantly, this approach can address not only objective levels of crime, but also residents' fear of crime. It is usually used in the context of community-based, multi-sector “urban renewal” programs that attempt to address the causes of crime through targeted social, economic, and situational crime prevention measures in specific “hot spot” neighborhoods. See Box 10.1 for an example of this approach in Jamaica.

10.10 *Citizen security initiatives* (also known as “public safety”), as developed by several countries in the Caribbean and Latin America—often with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank—are eminently cross-sectoral in nature. They typically involve violence prevention using the public health approach, combined with investments in criminal justice and, more recently, crime prevention through environmental design. The best-known of these initiatives has been in Bogota, where homicides rates were reduced by more than half between 1994 and 2000 (Mockus, 2001). The IDB-financed Jamaica Citizen Security and Justice Project is a regional example of this approach. In addition, Guyana has just received approval of two IDB loans for a Citizen Security project (that will include police modernization and institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Crime and Violence Observatory, and community interventions) and a Justice Sector Reform project which will include interventions in the prison system.

¹ For a complete list of potential interventions targeting youth violence, classified by developmental stage of youth, level of the ecological model (individual, relationship, community or society), and probable effectiveness, see Chapter 5.

Table 10.1. Public Policy approaches and interventions to address urban violence

Policy approach	Goal	Types of violence addressed	Typical interventions
<i>Sector-specific</i>			
Criminal justice	Deterring and controlling violence through higher arrest and conviction rates and more severe punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime • Robbery • Corruption 	Judicial reform
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime • Robbery 	Police reform
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delinquency • Robbery • Gender-based violence 	Accessible justice systems Mobile courts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-based violence 	Community policing Women's police stations
Public health	Preventing violence by reducing individual risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth violence • Gender-based violence • Homicide 	Preschool programs Home visitation programs School-based social development programs Restriction of alcohol sales Restrictions on gun ownership Gun buy back programs
Conflict transformation and human rights	Resolving conflict nonviolently through negotiation and legal enforcement of human rights by states and other social actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political violence 	Traditional systems of justice Government human rights advocates or ombudsman Civil society advocacy NGOs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional violence • HR abuses • Arbitrary detention 	
<i>Cross-sectoral</i>			
Crime prevention through environmental design / urban renewal	Reducing violence by focusing on the settings of crime rather than the perpetrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic violence • Social violence 	Local level programs Urban renewal programs Integrated slum upgrading programs
Citizen security/public safety	Using cross-sector measures to prevent or reduce violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic violence • Social violence 	National level programs Local level programs
Community-driven development (CDD)/ social capital	Rebuilding social capital, trust, and cohesion in informal and formal social institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth gangs 	Community-based solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-based violence 	Crisis services for victims Ongoing support and prevention Communication campaigns School programs Programs for perpetrators

Source: Adapted from Moser et al. (2005) and Moser and Winton (2002).

10.11 The Community-Driven Social Development approach focuses on rebuilding social cohesion in informal and formal institutions using small, participatory and demand-driven projects that aim to create trust by building on the strengths and assets of poor communities affected by violence. This approach has been particularly used to fight gang violence and domestic violence. In the Caribbean, this approach has often been adopted by NGOs (see Box 10.2 for a description of such a program in Trinidad and Tobago), although successful projects increasingly are adopted and scaled-up by government programs such as the DFID-supported Citizen Security Initiative in Jamaica.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS CRIME AND VIOLENCE

10.12 The preceding chapters have made clear that many of the factors contributing to crime and violence in the Caribbean—drug and weapons trafficking, money laundering, and deportees—transcend national boundaries. As such, they call for regional or international approaches and interventions that go beyond the local- or national-level responses described in the previous section.

10.13 Regional cooperation in combating transnational organized crime and drug trafficking requires a standardized legal regime. The internationally accepted vehicle for this standardization is the United Nations system of drugs and crime conventions, namely the three drug conventions (the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (including the protocols on Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants, and Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms) and the Convention against Corruption. While nearly every country in this region has ratified the drug conventions, compliance is much less in the case of the crime conventions, particularly the firearms protocol and the Convention against Corruption.

10.14 Some of the Caribbean's regional security institutions were designed to deal with earlier, more traditional threats to national security. The *Regional Security System* (RSS), for example, was created in 1982 by the Eastern Caribbean States (and Barbados) in response to the threat perceived from the Marxist government of Grenada.² Its Memorandum of Understanding stipulates that if a member state's security was threatened, it has the right to request assistance from other members of the RSS. Initially, the RSS was conceived as a mutual defense treaty against external aggression or internal coup attempts.

10.15 Much later, in 1996, the memorandum of understanding was upgraded into a treaty. This greatly expanded the scope of issues that the RSS would tackle. Article 4 of the treaty describes the purpose of the RSS to be the promotion of cooperation in: i) interdiction of traffic in illegal drugs; ii) national emergencies; iii) search and rescue; iv) immigration control; v) fisheries protection; vi) customs and excise control; vii) maritime policing; viii) natural and other disasters; ix) pollution control; x) combating threats to national security; xi) prevention of smuggling; and xii) the protection of offshore installations and exclusive economic zones (Dillon, 2004). While the RSS's remit has expanded dramatically, its capabilities have not. Consequently, its ability to deal with issues such as drug and arms trafficking is limited. Important limitations

² Grenada, Montserrat, and St. Kitts and Nevis--did not initially sign the RSS MOU.

include the obvious fact that its operations are not Caribbean-wide and that there is limited coordination between the RSS and the national police forces of the OECS countries (Dillon, 2004).

Box 10.1. Crime and Violence Prevention Components in Bank-Financed Integrated Slum Upgrading Operations – Jamaica Inner Cities Basic Services for the Poor Project

The World Bank is supporting the operationalization of local crime and violence prevention in Jamaica through the development of a specific project component in the Inner Cities Basic services for the Poor Project. The component seeks to take advantage of the infrastructure and social investments taking place and mainstream prevention at the local level into the overall project. In terms of the approaches described above, the component adopts an urban renewal approach complemented with a citizen security focus at the local level.

The component focuses specifically on the reduction of the very high levels of homicide, youth violence, and associated risk factors in the participating inner cities. Particularly important are the synergies between infrastructure provision, upgrading, and situational prevention on the one hand, and community-based “social prevention” activities on the other. The overall objective is a comprehensive intervention at the neighborhood level that is closely coordinated with other relevant donor, government, and non-governmental programs addressing crime and violence and their associated risk factors in these neighborhoods. The component has five subcomponents:

- *Diagnostics*: Crime and violence mapping of the micro areas using police statistics and where possible using Geographical Information Systems (GIS); the victimization section in the baseline surveys; and, community-based and situational diagnostics.
- *Situational prevention*: measures that reduce opportunities for particular crime and violence problems through spatial interventions such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) methodology and urban renewal. This method is mainstreamed in the infrastructure works of the projects through the training of the architects, engineers and other technical staff. It includes the planning and installation of social infrastructure such as community centers, playing fields, public lighting, and zinc fence removal and installation of safe alternatives. This methodology is quite new in the LAC region but has been successfully piloted in countries such as Chile, Brazil, and Colombia.
- *Social Prevention*: support of both immediate mitigation and conflict resolution activities in addition to other preventive and capacity enhancement interventions that will have a medium- and long-term impact on levels of public safety. In particular, the component finances a menu of initiatives in five broad categories to be tailored to the individual needs of each community: (1) mediation and conflict resolution; (2) alternative livelihoods and skills development; (3) family support services, (4) youth education and recreation; and (5) CBO capacity-building.
- *Community Liaison Officers*: The role of these technical experts in community organization and crime and violence prevention at the neighborhood level is to: carry out community-based diagnostics; formulate participatory community safety plans and strategies; liaise and coordinate with other relevant agencies and associations, in particular with Community Safety Councils and the Police; coordinate closely with those designing infrastructure to ensure integration of CPTED principles; identify and work with at-risk youth in the community; organize and mobilize the community around the concept of safety through community campaigns (e.g. community clean-up/painting days, community safety festival, etc.); initiate additional projects such as summer camp for at-risk youth.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation component*: Evaluations of the components have been designed and will be carried out. While evaluation data from these Bank-financed projects are not yet available, similar community-based integrated interventions have yielded dramatic results.

Box 10.2. The Pride in Gonzales Initiative, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: A Community-Driven Social Development Approach

The Pride of Gonzales initiative was begun in 2003 in a violence-ravaged, Port of Spain suburban community of approximately 1,000 households. It was the brainchild of the community's parish priest after there had been six murders in a five-week period.

The initiative is a collaboration of CITY, the Ministry of National Security, the City of Port of Spain, the Canadian Institute of Planners, the University of the West Indies and the community of Gonzales. Some of the successful partnerships include: a partnership with the Ministry of Public Utilities to improve the piped water supply and street lighting; a partnership with the Water & Sewerage Authority to upgrade water delivery to the area; and partnership with the Ministry of National Security to provide a different kind of policing. There has been an upsurge in social activities in the community such as football competitions, an Easter extravaganza, Christmas events for children, and an annual children's camp.

Other activities include an adolescent/human formation program, remedial education programs, programs in arts (dance, photography, video, and music) and sports. There have been clean-up activities and community notice boards have been set up. An Internet café, three homework clinics, gang intervention activities, capacity building for community leaders as well as counseling and crisis intervention strategies are all part of the ongoing initiative.

The initiative has transformed the community into a model one. Unfortunately, the period of peace was broken in August 2006 by two murders executed in one week. The challenge will be in seeing how the community will respond to this new threat of violence.

Sources: Catholic News, July 23, 2006; Sunday Newsday, July 23, 2006.

10.16 CARICOM has undertaken several important steps to deal with emerging regional security issues. The *Caribbean Financial Action Task Force* (CFATF) was created in 1992 by a ministerial meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, to address the issue of money laundering. The CFATF Secretariat monitors members' implementation of the Kingston Ministerial Declaration through the following activities:

- Self-assessment of the implementation of the recommendations
- An ongoing program of mutual evaluation of members
- Co-ordination of, and participation in, training and technical assistance programs
- Biannual plenary meetings for technical representatives
- Annual ministerial meetings

10.17 In the area of drug trafficking, CARICOM established the *Secretariat Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Drug Control* in 1997. CARICOM members have signed several international conventions and multilateral plans of action. Member states are signatories to the Barbados Plan of Action of May 1996; the Action Plan of October 1996 for the implementation of the Anti-drug Strategy in the Hemisphere; the Bridgetown Plan of Action emanating from the May 1997 Caribbean/U.S. Summit; and the European Union/Latin America/Caribbean Action Plan following the first EU/LA/Caribbean Summit in June 1999 (CARICOM, 2000). While Caribbean countries have signed many multilateral agreements, most activities to combat drug trafficking are in the context of bilateral arrangements (mostly with the U.S.) rather than as part

of regional initiatives (Dillon, 2004). As a result, most of the focus is on interdiction and supply reduction.

10.18 Perhaps the most important regional initiative in the area of crime and violence reduction was the *Regional Task Force on Crime and Security* (RTFCS). The Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, meeting in Nassau in July 2001, charged the RTFCS to identify the major causes of crime in the region and to recommend approaches to deal with related problems such as drugs and weapons trafficking. The RTFCS was composed of representatives of each member state, a representative of the RSS and of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police. Two of the region's most respected criminologists, Anthony Harriott (UWI, Mona Campus) and Ramesh Deosaran (UWI, St. Augustine) also participated in the Task Force.

10.19 The Task Force identified the following principal security threats to the region: illegal drugs, illegal firearms, corruption, rising crime against persons and property, criminal deportees, growing lawlessness, poverty and inequity, and terrorism; for the areas of illegal drugs, illegal firearms, terrorism and deportees, the report included a short discussion of key issues, challenges and a rather long list of detailed recommendations at both national and regional levels (CARICOM, 2002).³ The Task Force presented its report to a meeting of heads of government in July 2002; the recommendations of the Task Force were endorsed by this meeting.

10.20 A second important regional study on crime in the Caribbean was produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2004. Authored by Anthony Harriott, the report offered a series of policy recommendations focusing on the need to develop national capacity to prepare crime control plans and modernizing of criminal justice systems, including the police and correctional services.⁴ Importantly, this report also called for research to evaluate existing interventions and identify good practice approaches.

10.21 Caribbean Heads of Government endorsed a new Management Framework for Crime and Security in July 2005; this framework establishes a Council of Ministers responsible for security and law enforcement, a Policy Advisory Committee, and an Implementation Agency to implement CARICOM policy initiatives in this area. Steps were also taken to create mechanisms for regional coordination and cooperation in regional intelligence sharing (RIC, immigration, narco-trafficking, customs) and the accompanying CARICOM Treaty on Mutual Cooperation on Fighting Crime is being passed into domestic law in various countries (e.g. Guyana's parliament passed this into law in May 2006).

10.22 Thus, there have been serious efforts at the regional level to understand the factors driving crime and violence in the Caribbean and to begin to formulate a regional policy response. These responses, however, are still in their infancy. For example, small-scale drug interdiction campaigns have been carried out in coordinated fashion by the region's police forces (under the

³ The key findings from these sections have been incorporated into the relevant sections of this report.

⁴ Specific recommendations for modernizing the police included increasing the use of technology, improving training, applying effective management tools and strengthening accountability, and improving police-citizen relations. The only specific recommendation for reform of correctional systems was to examine alternatives to imprisonment and to reduce recidivism, although no detail was provided on how to achieve this reduced recidivism.

aegis of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police) over brief periods of time, but there is limited ongoing international cooperation. In the area of weapons control, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean has carried out a number of trainings for law enforcement officials on the commercial trade and trafficking in firearms, using a “train the trainers” methodology. Beyond capacity building, however, regional collaboration in combating weapons trafficking has been limited.

10.23 It is important to note that many of the issues facing the Caribbean transcend regional boundaries. Demand for drugs emanates from Europe and the United States; deportees are sent back to the region from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada; many weapons that are trafficked are sourced from the United States.

10.24 No regional strategy in these areas can hope to succeed without significant support from these OECD countries. This support has frequently been lacking, especially for weapons control and deportees. As Peter Phillips, the Jamaican Minister of National Security commented in the area of weapons control, “Strategies to interdict the flow of drugs from south to north must be supported by greater efforts to restrict the flow of guns in the reverse direction.”⁵ In the area of deportees, this report identified important interventions that could be undertaken by deporting countries in order to minimize the negative impact of deportees on crime in the Caribbean; these interventions have the potential not only to reduce crime in the Caribbean, but also to put a dent in international crime syndicates that conduct business in the United States and elsewhere. Similarly, and as pointed out in the case study on drug interdiction in the Netherlands Antilles, Caribbean countries will require support from OECD countries to finance some of the more costly elements of interdiction strategies (naval patrols, radar, etc.).

PRIORITY STEPS TO ACHIEVE REDUCTIONS IN CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN

10.25 Caribbean governments have come to recognize that crime and violence are an important development issue. This is buttressed by the evidence in Chapter 4 which documents that crime and violence exact a serious toll on growth in Caribbean countries; conversely, reducing crime and violence will generate growth and reduce poverty. The implication is clear: **violence and crime reduction should be considered an important element of development policy making**—at the national, regional, and international levels. It therefore also means that crime and violence is a key issue for the traditional development partners of these countries. To date, support in this area by the donor community has been somewhat piecemeal. Donors need to work closely with their Caribbean partners to coordinate action and assistance across a range of interventions.

10.26 In general, there has been an **over-reliance on the criminal justice approach** to crime reduction in the region, to the detriment of other complementary approaches which can be effective in reducing certain types of crime and violence. Over the last few years, however, several countries such as Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are increasingly investing in different approaches. At the same time, it is also crucial to note that certain types of crime and

⁵ “The battle for security”, remarks by Peter Phillips (Jamaican Minister of National Security) at the annual Wilton Park Conference (London, September 2005).

violence—in particular, organized crime and drug trafficking—are largely impervious to prevention approaches; a criminal justice-focused approach is essential in dealing with them.

10.27 The important role that preventive approaches can play is now beginning to be recognized:

- Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) has significant potential to generate rapid decreases in property crime and some forms of inter-personal violence. The region is just beginning to explore this kind of situational crime prevention (see Box 10.1).
- Integrated citizen security approaches have seen initial success in Capotillo in the Dominican Republic (see Box 8.1 for more detail on the Capotillo experience) and should be explored elsewhere. These programs, by combining modern methods of policing with prevention interventions undertaken by both government and non-governmental organizations, are extremely promising.
- The public health approach, which focuses on modifying risk factors for violent conduct, is especially promising for addressing violence against women and youth violence. A good example of a program targeting risk factors for violent behavior are the Centros Educativos de Fe y Alegría (Educational Centers of Faith and Happiness) in the Dominican Republic, which integrate services for poor and excluded communities, including formal education (pre-K through 12th grades, under agreement with the Ministry), religious education, nutrition and health services, life skills training, vocational training, parenting training, and community mobilization.
- The conflict transformation/human rights approach has not been used in a significant way in the Caribbean. To the extent that violence and crime are “not simply a matter of ordinary criminality but rather the outcome of a profoundly political power dynamic... [one can] make the case for a more unconventional short-term response to this violence” (Harriott, 2004b). Such innovative options might include community peace-building efforts. Harriott goes on to make the case that direct involvement of citizens and communities “tends to strengthen the moral authority of the state’s control institutions and improves their effectiveness.”

Recommendations at the national level

10.28 The report of the Regional Task Force on Crime and Security shied away from making detailed recommendations at the national level: “The differences in the nature of the crime problem across the region make it difficult, indeed imprudent, to try to elaborate recommendations that are applicable at the national levels” (CARICOM, 2002).

10.29 This is an accurate assessment. The region is far too heterogeneous for one-size-fits-all recommendations for interventions at the national level. The chapters in this study, however, do provide sufficient evidence to make a few key recommendations that can guide policy making.

1. This report has culled many different sources of data to present as comprehensive a picture as possible of crime and violence in the Caribbean. Yet it is clear that there are major **data gaps that hinder policy making** at both national and regional levels (see Box 10.3). Chief among them are **information systems** that allow policy makers (and citizens) to track

crime trends and gauge the impact of interventions. Also important are **victimization surveys**, undertaken at regular intervals, which permit comparison of crime levels both over time and across countries. Victimization data is essential, both to design interventions and to hold policy makers accountable for the results of their strategies to reduce crime and violence. Violence against women has become more visible in many regions of the world due to the collection of data from internationally validated, specialized victimization surveys. The Caribbean, however, is a notable exception: there is little in the way of serious data collection on violence against women, and none of the data are comparable across countries.

Box 10.3. The need for better data on crime

The measurement of crime is a complex exercise, considerably complicated by the lack of internationally comparable data. The best data on crime come from standardized victim surveys, such as those conducted under the International Victims of Crime Surveys (ICVS) program. Unfortunately, only one Caribbean country—Barbados—has conducted such a survey. Other victim surveys are helpful, but suffer from a lack of international comparability, due to differences in methodology.

Even standardized victim surveys suffer from several weaknesses. They can be expensive, particularly if the desired sample is large. Large samples are necessary to ascertain variations in crime victimization by geographic region or population group, or to learn more about the nature of particular crimes, especially low-incidence crimes such as murder. This information is very useful in designing crime prevention interventions and is not available from any other source. General victim surveys also fail to produce reliable data on certain sensitive topics, such as sexual offenses and domestic violence, for which specialized surveys are required. Household surveys fail to capture the impact of crimes on businesses which again requires specialized surveys. But despite these limitations, ICVS surveys remain the best source of standardized crime information, their greatest limitation being the lack of funding for their widespread and recurrent administration.

Data produced by the police on the crimes reported to them is the most commonly used form of crime data because it is readily available, but it suffers from both under-reporting and lack of international comparability, due to differences in crime definitions and administrative recording procedures. The United Nations biennial Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (CTS) attempts to overcome some of the comparability issues by asking member states to re-categorize crime incidents according to standardized definitions. Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, in the Caribbean only Bermuda and Suriname have replied to the Ninth Survey, which covers the period 2003-2004.

Crime is a politically sensitive issue and it is understandable that some governments may be loathe to expose themselves to international comparison. But comparisons are inevitably made on the basis of the raw police figures, and these comparisons are often unfair. Furthermore, crime is increasingly a trans-national issue, and good crime data is essential in the quest for collective solutions. For these reasons, countries that are serious about tackling crime should participate in both the ICVS and CTS programs. Regional organizations concerned with crime issues, such as CARICOM, can help coordinate participation of members in these data collection programs.

2. Good policy making to reduce crime and violence does not happen by accident. The Regional Task Force on Crime and Security (CARICOM, 2002) called for the development of **national crime control master plans** and the establishment of **national crime commissions** to ensure multi-sectoral collaboration. National plans allow for cross-sectoral collaboration and serious discussions about the priorities in resource allocation; equally importantly, they offer a vehicle for the involvement of civil society organizations, where

much of the expertise in violence prevention resides. While the Task Force recommendations have been heeded in some countries, in some they have not. Preparation of a national plan should be a priority in these countries.

3. National crime control master plans should recognize the **complementarity of violence/crime prevention and control**. The issue is not of prevention *versus* control, but rather the appropriate mix for local conditions. It is important to recognize that not all prevention interventions have long gestation periods and not all control interventions will have immediate impacts.

4. The **reform of under-performing criminal justice systems should be a priority**. Reform initiatives will have a greater probability of success if **information systems and associated performance measurement indicators** are used to chart progress in improving efficiency and quality of services and if attention is paid to ensuring that individual agencies in the criminal justice system are in **alignment** with one another and not working at cross-purposes. **Modernization of policing** through the use of information systems and problem-oriented policing is a key element of criminal justice sector reform.

5. **Youth violence** is a particularly important issue in many countries. While there are a multitude of programs in the region to address youth violence, few if any have been subject to rigorous impact evaluation. At the same time, there is a wealth of information about what works in youth prevention in the U.S. and a few other developed countries. In the short run, regional policy makers could **borrow from this toolkit of proven programs** such as early childhood development and mentoring programs, interventions to increase retention of high-risk youth in secondary schools, and opening schools on after-hours and on weekends to offer youth attractive activities to occupy their free time. In the medium and long run, impact evaluations should systematically document what works in youth violence prevention in the Caribbean.

Recommendations at the regional level

10.30 Good policy making at the national level is important but not enough. Many of the issues facing the Caribbean transcend national boundaries and require a **coordinated regional response**. Important first steps have been taken with the creation of the Regional Task Force on Crime and Security, its 2002 report, and the new Management Framework for Crime and Security, created in 2005. While the creation of the Management Framework is an important step, much remains to be done in terms of funding these new institutions and ensuring that they have adequate staffing and effectively influence policy making at the national level.

10.31 Specific recommendations at the regional level include:

1. In the area of **deportees**, CARICOM has an important role to play in negotiating with developed nations for more support for the reintegration of deportees. At a minimum, this support can take the form of improved coordination and information flows between deporting agencies and Caribbean governments. More ambitiously, CARICOM could explore options for deporting nations to fund deportee reintegration programs. With or without international financing, more services should be offered to reintegrate deportees, along the lines of those provided by the Office for the Resettlement of Deportees in St. Kitts and Nevis. Serious studies on the issue of deportees are needed—both to quantify

the impact of deportees on national crime rates, and to measure the cost-effectiveness of deportee reintegration programs.⁶

2. The chapter on **drug trafficking** provides a successful case of interdiction of cocaine in the Netherlands Antilles. Given that Caribbean countries are transit and not producer countries for cocaine, **interdiction needs to be complemented by other strategies outside of the region** (principally demand reduction in consumer countries and eradication and/or alternative development in producer countries). Within the region, policies focusing on **mitigating the damage from drugs should focus on limiting the availability of firearms and on providing meaningful alternatives to youth**.
3. **Gun ownership** is an outgrowth of the drug trade and, in some countries, a legacy of party politics and associated garrison communities. Within these environments which promote the demand for weapons, reducing gun ownership is a difficult undertaking. At the regional level, **coordination between law enforcement agencies on intelligence and interdiction** are important. At the national level or sub-regional level, better **gun registries, marking and tracking can help, as can improved gun interdiction in ports**. Long run and sustained reduction in the demand for guns, however, will hinge on progress in combating drugs and on changing the cultural factors which increase the demand of young men for weapons.
4. In general, regional coordination will be essential to **minimize displacement effects**. Particularly in the area of drug trafficking, successful national efforts may lead to criminal activities being displaced to other countries in the region. If displacement is to be avoided, it is essential that **information be shared and that policies and interventions be coordinated**.

Final considerations

10.32 The different approaches to crime and violence prevention outlined in the first section of this chapter mean that there are **multiple possible entry points to reduce crime and violence**. In one instance, the most promising approach may be in the context of a slum-upgrading project; in another, in the context of a reform of the health service; in a third, in the context of a reform of the criminal justice system. There is no one “ideal” approach. The common denominator is that successful interventions are **evidence-based**, starting with a clear diagnostic about types of violence and risk factors, and ending with a careful evaluation of the intervention’s impact which will inform future actions.

10.33 In general, a successful approach at that national level will involve **multiple interventions**. Evidence from developed countries suggests that some of the most cost-effective prevention interventions focus on children and families. Since some of these may pay dividends only in the medium- to long-run, they must be complemented by interventions that can generate significant short-run reductions in crime and violence. Candidates in this latter group include integrated citizen security approaches (which, as seen above, combine modern methods of policing with prevention interventions undertaken by both government and non-governmental

⁶ At the time of the writing of this report, a CARICOM survey on deportees was forthcoming. The findings and recommendations were to be presented to the CARICOM Ministers of National Security and Heads of Conference and were not available at the time of this writing.

organizations), situational crime prevention, and programs which address the immediate needs of youth at high risk for violent or criminal behavior.