

29 March 2018

Submission to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee on the complex relationship between crime and development and the importance of criminological research for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee's References inquiry and report on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

This submission has been prepared by researchers in the field of criminology based in the Schools of Social Sciences at Monash University and the University of Tasmania and is attached to this letter.

Our submission draws primarily from our on-going research on 1) international police capacity building, 2) global crime governance, 3) gender-based violence, and 4) environmental crime. This work was recently published in an article titled 'Criminology and the UN Sustainable Development Goals' that was published by three of the contributors in the *British Journal of Criminology* in 2017.

A copy of this article and four additional examples of scholarship that relating to different aspects of this 'crime-development nexus' are included as an appendix to this submission.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of this submission or our wider research on crime, justice and sustainable development further with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

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Submission to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee on the complex relationship between crime and development and the importance of criminological research for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

This inquiry represents an important opportunity to examine the complex relationship between crime and development in the context of the SDG. It also presents an opportunity to highlight how ongoing research on crime, justice and security in Australia can support the Australian Government and governments throughout the Indo-Pacific region in implementing this agenda.

With this submission, we stress that crime, broadly defined, is both an obstacle to development and a consequence of development. Understanding this complex relationship is essential for creating conditions that are necessary for meeting the UN sustainable development targets and for developing resilience to the instabilities resulting from uneven development and climate change throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

Our submission is structured in four sections:

1. Overview of Our Expertise
2. Background: Crime and Development
3. Response to Terms of Reference
4. Recommendations

OVERVIEW OF OUR EXPERTISE

Dr Jarrett Blaustein has written extensively on globalisation and police reform in the Global South. He has previously conducted research on this topic in Bosnia and Herzegovina where he also contributed to the design of a community safety project for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He is currently leading a study at Monash University that examines how the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is working to support the SDG and the challenges it faces in doing so.

Dr Kate Fitz-Gibbon is internationally recognised for her research in gender based violence and legal responses to violence. Her research in Australia and internationally has examined responses to intimate partner homicide, homicide law reform, family violence and risk as well as youth justice and the rights of children in conflict with the law. She has advised on homicide law reform, family violence and youth justice reviews in several Australian jurisdictions.

Professor Rob White is internationally recognised for his work on transnational environmental crime. He has published a number of books on the topic. His research examines three interconnected justice-related approaches to environmental harm: Environmental justice, which is concerned with harm to the environment that impacts on other humans (e.g. toxic waste); ecological justice, which is concerned with harm to ecosystems and plant species (e.g. deforestation); and species justice, which is concerned with harm to animals (e.g. animal abuse).

We recently drew upon these diverse areas of expertise in a co-authored article published in the prestigious *British Journal of Criminology*¹. The article accounted for how criminological research can support the implementation of the SDG and some of the problems associated with specific goals and targets. We are currently in the process of improving the knowledge base around crime and sustainable development by editing a *Handbook on Crime, Justice and Sustainable Development* (under contract with Emerald publishing, further details of contributors can be provided on request).

BACKGROUND: CRIME AND DEVELOPMENT

The relationship between crime and development is inherently complex but understanding this complexity is essential for achieving the SDGs. There are two important aspects of this relationship that we seek to account for in this section: crime as a barrier to development and crime as a consequence of development.

Crime as a barrier to development

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)², the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)³, and World Bank⁴ have produced multiple international and regional studies which conclude that high levels of crime and violence deter international investors and undermine economic growth. The loss of investment as a result of this is said to impact the wider population by impeding job creation and by limiting opportunities for social and economic mobility. Underpinning this argument is the assumption that economic growth produces wider economic and social benefits that are distributed throughout society. UNODC and World Bank have acknowledged however that these benefits are undermined by corruption in both the public and the private sectors.⁵ Beyond the economic realm, it is also clear that crime and corruption have environmental impacts that often generate economic and social costs. For example, illegal deforestation in countries such as Indonesia not only has consequences in regards climate change but is associated with air pollution that affects many other countries in the region. Likewise, wildlife trafficking is a significant problem in the Asia-Pacific region (including Australia as a destination, origin and transit country), directly threatening the viability of plant and animal species. Transnational environmental crime frequently involves cross-over crimes such as drug dealing, corruption, crimes of violence, and human trafficking.⁶ Finally, crime and violence have a unique and particularly damaging impact on gender equality as a precondition for women's development in countries around the world. Numerous studies in Australia and elsewhere have evidenced higher rates of violence against women in countries where gender inequality is greater.⁷ In the last five years Australia has devoted significant resources to the research and reform of prevention strategies, and responses to intimate partner violence – the most prevalent form of gendered violence.⁸

¹ Blaustein, J., Pino, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K., and White, R. (2017) 'Criminology and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: The Need for Support and Critique' *British Journal of Criminology*, Online First. (See Appendix)

² UNDP (1994) *Human Development Report*. New York: Oxford University Press.

³ UNODC (2005) *Crime and Development in Africa*. Vienna: UNODC.

⁴ Chhibber, A. et al. (1997) *World Development Report: The State in a Changing World*. Washington DC: World Bank Group.

⁵ UNODC and World Bank (2007) *Crime, Violence and Development: Trends, Costs and Policy Options in the Caribbean*. Washington DC: World Bank Group.

⁶ White, R. (2016) 'Building NESTs to combat environmental crime networks' *Trends in Organized Crime*, 19(1): 88-105.

⁷ For example: True, J. (2012) *The Political Economy of Violence Against Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.; World Health Organisation. (2013) *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. World Health Organisation, Switzerland.

⁸ For example, Royal Commission into Family Violence. (2015) *Report and Recommendations*.

Crime as a consequence of development

At the same time, the elevated levels of crime, violence and corruption that exist in many developing countries are in-part attributable to the social and economic instabilities generated by previous development paradigms.⁹ This idea once served as the cornerstone of the UN's 'social defence' programme which was developed to assist recently de-colonised nations of the Global South manage the instabilities of rapid industrialization and urban growth with limited resources.¹⁰ Today this refers to the ongoing efforts of international financial institutions like the World Bank to promote economic liberalisation measures in the Global South.¹¹ This is not to suggest that economic policies associated with the 'Post-Washington Consensus' must be abandoned but simply, it must be acknowledged that any economic model that generates inequality will generate social instabilities, violence¹² and corruption¹³.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This submission responds to three Terms of Reference (TOR) that are directly relevant to responding to crime, corruption and violence as sustainable development issues in the Indo-Pacific region.

A) the understanding and awareness of the SDG across the Australian Government and in the wider Australian community;

Criminologists have a key role to play, alongside other knowledge experts and international development practitioners, in enhancing understanding and awareness of the SDG across the Australian Government and in the wider Australian community. Australian universities and criminology - as an interdisciplinary field of study - are well positioned to tackle the complexities associated with implementing and evaluating the SDG as well as enhancing understanding of and awareness surrounding the SDG in the Australian community. Current research demonstrates the ability of criminologists to translate knowledge into policies and practices that can then be implemented by a range of stakeholders working to promote justice, security and the rule of law throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The challenges they face in doing so is two-fold.

First, the knowledge base relating to the impact of crime and corruption on development (and vice versa) in the Indo-Pacific region is limited. This is due to the fact that unlike other parts of the world (for example Africa and Latin America), there has never been a comprehensive regional assessment of these issues.

Second, the availability of funding to specifically support internationally focused research on crime, justice and development and associated knowledge-translation activities that align with the SDG in the Indo-Pacific region is limited. While there are discreet research projects currently being undertaken, a coordinated national research agenda with dedicated funding specifically benchmarked for this purpose would promote a breadth of new knowledge that

⁹ Blaustein et al., 'Criminology and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

¹⁰ See Blaustein, J., Pino, N. and Ellison, G. (2018) 'Crime and Development in the Global South' in Carrington, K. et al. (Eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminology and the Global South*. Basingstoke: Palgrave: pp. 205-222.

¹¹ See Chapter 2 of Ellison, G. and Pino, N. (2012) *Globalisation, Police Reform and Development: Doing it the Western Way?*

¹² See for example, Kelly, M. (2000) 'Inequality and Crime' *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 82(4): 530-539.

¹³ Jong-sung, Y., and Khagram, S. (2005) 'A Comparative Study of Inequality and Corruption' *American Sociological Review*, 70(1): 136-157.

can be used to inform the implementation of the SDGs as well as awareness of them in the wider community.

D) how can performance against the SDG be monitored and communicated in a way that engages government, businesses and the public, and allows effective review of Australia's performance by civil society;

The Australian government should establish an independent monitor to oversee and report on the Australia's performance in implementing and achieving the SDG. The monitor should be tasked with reporting to parliament periodically against the SDG broadly and specifically against each of the targets and indicators. These reports should be made publicly available to allow for independent scrutiny of Australia's performance by civil society. Similar roles have been created in other areas of review and reform. For example, following the Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victorian the state government has appointed former Victoria Police Acting Chief Commissioner Tim Cartwright to act as an Independent Monitor role. In his role, Mr Cartwright will report directly to Parliament.

F) which of the SDG is Australia best suited to achieving through our ODA program, and should Australia's ODA be consolidated to focus on achieving core SDG;

Security lies at the heart of SDG 16. This is a regional priority for the Australian Government and seems logical that the Australian Government would seek to allocate ODA funding for programs and projects designed to promote stability, peace and human rights in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition to the academic expertise already noted, Australia is also well-positioned to make a valuable contribution towards SDG 16 because the Australian Federal Police (AFP) has an established international presence in South East Asia and the Pacific. At the same time, we wish to stress that Australia's efforts to promote stability, justice and the rule of law internationally should form part of a comprehensive ODA program that seeks to promote sustainable solutions to the underlying causes of conflict and instability including inequality (e.g. economic, gender) and climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This submission has made the following recommendations:

Recommendation: The Federal Government should commission a comprehensive regional study of crime, corruption and development in the Indo-Pacific region.

Recommendation: The Federal Government should introduce a national research funding scheme to establish a wider knowledge-base about specific issues relating to crime and corruption as they relate to different SDG.

Recommendation: The Australian Government should appoint an independent monitor to oversee and publicly report on Australian performance in addressing and achieving the SDG.

Recommendation: SDG 16 should be a funding priority for the Australian Government given its regional security interests but a comprehensive approach to supporting the SDG is essential for addressing the 'root' causes of conflict and instability in the region.

