

DIAGNOSTIC OF CITIZEN
SAFETY IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
BAHAMAS

*A Report submitted to the Inter
American Development Bank*

Marlon Johnson
Safe Bahamas
May 2004

Executive Summary

Background

Among other Caribbean countries, The Bahamas experiences a high level of national development and standard of living. Nonetheless, the country is not immune to crime and violence. Crime and insecurity impede development and contribute to fear. In order to develop a balanced picture of crime in the Bahamas, we examined patterns and trends in recorded crime and compiled information on existing crime prevention strategies.

Patterns and trends in crime

Patterns of recorded crime in the Bahamas present a complex picture. While the last 40 years has witnessed substantial increases in recorded crime overall, it is difficult to know the extent to which this reflects real increases in crime or improvements in police recording. Yet, despite high peaks in recorded crimes in the mid-1990s, overall rates of recorded crime have been declining over recent years. In fact, rates of overall crime for the period 1998-2002 were at the same level as those from the mid-1970s, down 22 percent from the peak years of 1993-1997.

This said, violent crime rates have shown more consistent increases over recent decades. For example, the murder rate has roughly doubled from an average of 10 homicides per 100,000 each year to 19 between the period 1973-1977 and the more recent period 1998-2002. Similarly, the recorded robbery rate has increased from 202 per 100,000 in the period 1973-77 to 375 in 1998-2002. However, even rates of violent crimes have shown recent reductions, being 32% lower overall in 2002 than in 1998.

While recorded crime rates have declined or somewhat stabilized in the last five years, this is not a reason for complacency. In line with many other countries, it seems likely there have been real long-term increases in crime over the last half century. And, while it is difficult to make international comparisons in the absence of standardized data, the homicide rate in the Bahamas is substantially higher than many industrialized countries, and is high even compared to Caribbean countries. Recent annual averages place the homicide rate in the Bahamas at about 18 per 100,000, compared with 41 in Jamaica, 11 in Trinidad and Tobago, 8 in Barbados, 2 in the UK and 6 in the US. This relatively high homicide rate is a concern in and of itself, and may also be an indication of relatively high levels of violence in Bahamas compared to other countries, though more research would be needed to establish this with confidence.

Contexts of crime

In order to better understand these trends this report places this information in context by identifying where, and by whom crime occurs. In terms of geography, crime in the Bahamas tends to be an urban phenomenon, with rates in New Providence and Grand Bahama – home to the capital city of Nassau and the second city of Freeport respectively – approximately three times that of the more rural communities of the Family Islands. And within the city of New Providence, the inner city neighborhoods account for the majority of violent crimes nationwide, with well over half of such crimes taking place within three police districts of the island.

Accordingly, it is the poor within the country who tend to be the primary victims of crime and violence. Women and children are also particularly vulnerable to crime and violence. Over half the murders for the period of 2001 and 2002 were domestic related. The number of known sexual offenses against women and minors continue to increase even where other numbers have moderated. Perpetrators tend more often to be young urban males.

There are notable factors that tend to influence crime: The large majority of reported crime takes place between Thursday and Saturday evenings; there is some indication that drugs and alcohol are a factor in the commission of crime. The period of 1988 to 2001 suggests a clear and positive correlation between crime and unemployment levels. The increasing rate of crime and violence over time also seems to in some way corresponded with the increase in the number of households headed by single parents.

Strategies to reduce crime

Across the world, there have many thousands of initiatives developed to address citizen safety issues similar to those in the Bahamas. A considerable number of studies have been carried out to determine which types of programs work to prevent or mitigate crime, and which simply do not have any measurable impact on crime either immediately or over time. The core themes shared by the ‘successful’ programs and strategies are:

- *Integrated and cooperative public and civic management* – programs which show positive effect often must develop multi-faceted strategies that must cut across agencies and across sectors to be implemented successfully;
- *Reduction of Opportunities and the increase of Risk for would-be offenders* – to impact crime in the short term, potential targets must be ‘hardened’ to reduce opportunities for offenses, while active and passive surveillance must be

increased to heighten the risk that perpetrators will be apprehended

- *Sustained and targeted Intervention strategies* – for programs targeted at modifying destructive behavior patterns in individuals, there is a need for specificity in what behavior patterns are being addressed, as well as for constancy in the intervention programs.

The public authorities and broader Bahamian community have responded with great effort to combat crime, especially over the last decade. The governments commissioned studies on Youth, Crime and Police Reform, to obtain recommendations to address the relevant issues. The findings of the Youth and Crime did not, however, make full use of available statistical evidence to shape its findings. There is also little evidence that these reports, in developing their recommendations, made significant reference to international best practices. Yet, even more promising recommendations of these reports have yet to be implemented. The recommendations of the Police Reform study have been executed, with some indications of preliminary improvements to Police administration and service delivery.

The Bahamian community through relevant civil society organizations (CSOs) – and at times in conjunction with public sector agencies - has mobilized considerable resources to address elements of the crime situation. Most have focused on youth development, but organizations also have been formed or expanded to address issues such as domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and neighborhood development and empowerment. To date, however, these efforts have met with limited success in creating a sustained downturn in crime.

Key recommendations

To address crime and violence in The Bahamas, policy makers should give consideration to a single national plan of action that would build upon promising elements of current initiatives. It would however, in developing the plan, identify a limited number of coordinating entities to oversee distinct components of the plan. It would also demand comprehensive and ongoing evidence-led evaluation of programs and strategies to permit mid-stream adjustments where necessary.

The recommended strategy and program areas outlined below – presented for inclusion in the national plan - are based principally upon ‘what works’ in other jurisdictions, tailored to the needs and peculiarities of the Bahamian setting. They are organized according to what is expected to show demonstrable impact in the near term (within 12 months), the medium term (within 36 months) and the long term (greater than 36 months). To be

effective in taking the following strategies forward, it will be critical to embrace comprehensive evaluation of their programs to determine actual, as opposed to perceived impact.

Short term

- Expand Police Hot-spot patrolling with emphasis on inner city areas of New Providence during ‘problematic’ week-end period
- Promote a ‘Target Hardening’ Campaign with public subsidy (i.e. custom duty reduction) for security related purchases by individuals and businesses
- Introduce an ‘Anti Domestic Violence Initiative’ that would expand police powers to arrest and charge suspects without victim consent, that would provide for extended intervention and support for victims, and that would incorporate extensive public education and sensitization
- Introduce Repeat Offender Unit in the Police Force designed to track and quickly apprehend ‘high-risk’ re-offenders

Medium term

- Focus on early identification of and intervention with critical ‘at-risk’ teenagers incorporating comprehensive and sustained attention from the educational and social services systems.
- Enforce existing Alcohol Laws
- Enhance support for Drug and Alcohol treatment programs
- Expand Shelters for victims of Domestic Violence
- Accelerate Police Reform and Modernization with focus on more training for Police Officers, better forensic facilities and upgrade of IT utilization
- Improve tracking and sharing of case information between related public entities on matters related to ‘at-risk’ youth and domestic and sexual violence cases

Long term

- Expand After-school and Week-end program for ‘at-risk’ young persons
- Introduce Parental training and support mechanisms, with incentives for those most ‘in need’ to attend
- Continue promotion of responsible reproductive health
- Strengthen and reshape Police Community Consultative Committees

Table of Contents

1	Introduction & Methodology	1
2	Patterns of Crime and Violence in The Bahamas	3
	2.1.1 Reported Crime in The Bahamas – An Historical Perspective: 1963-2002 3	
	2.1.1.1 Categories of Crime, Definitions and Methodology	3
	2.1.1.2 A Snapshot of Crime since 1963	4
	2.1.1.3 Trends in Violent Crimes: Specific Classifications	6
	2.1.2 A Geographical Comparison: New Providence & Grand Bahama vs. Family Islands	7
	2.1.3 The Bahamas and the World: A Comparison of Statistics on Reported Violence	9
	2.1.4 A Declining Crime Rate? The Period of 1998-2002 Reviewed	10
	2.1.5 When Crime happens?	12
2.2	The Socio-economics of Crime and Violence in The Bahamas	13
	2.2.1 Domestic Violence and Child Abuse: A pressing concern	13
	2.2.2 Crime and Unemployment	14
	2.2.3 Vulnerable Communities: Crime and Violence in the ‘Over-The-Hill’ Neighborhoods	14
	2.2.4 The changing family structure and its impact on child and adolescent socialization	16
	2.2.5 Who’s committing the crimes? Key perpetrators	17
	2.2.6 Contributing Factors: Drugs & Alcohol	18
2.3	Data Collection and Analysis: Reliability and Prospects	19
	2.3.1 Information Utilization in the Police Force	19
	2.3.2 Information Utilization in Other Public Agencies	20
	2.3.3 Improving Informatics to Improve Citizen Safety: Summary Recommendations	22
2.4	Assessment of Crime Trends – A Summary	22
3	Crime Prevention Programs and Policies	24
3.1	International Best Practices: What works in preventing crime	25
	3.1.1 Integrated and cooperative public and civic management	25
	3.1.2 Reduction of Opportunities and Increase of Risk for would-be perpetrators	26
	3.1.3 Sustained and targeted Intervention strategies	27
	3.1.4 Relevance of International Best-practices in the Bahamian context	30
3.2	Key Bahamian Strategies to address crime and violence– The impact of public and civil society efforts to date.	30
	3.2.1 Public sector led research and reports	30
	3.2.2 Public Sector and Civil Society Initiatives to promote citizen safety	32
	3.2.2.1 Youth Focused Initiatives	32
	3.2.2.2 Child Abuse and Neglect	33
	3.2.2.3 Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence	33
	3.2.2.4 Alcohol and Drug Abuse	34
	3.2.2.5 CSO Coordination and Cooperative Efforts	34
	3.2.2.6 Challenges to Optimal Effectiveness of Public Sector and CSO initiatives	34

4	Strategies for Addressing Priority Violence & Crime Problems	38
4.1	Priority Areas of Focus – Actors and Factors	39
4.1.1	Violent Offenses	39
4.1.2	Violence against women and children	39
4.1.3	Reducing the incidence of Theft, Breaking & Entering	40
4.1.4	Drug & Alcohol Abuse & Mitigation	40
4.2	A National Action Plan to Combat Crime and Violence	41
4.2.1	Short term Strategies (0-12 month impact time).....	41
4.2.1.1	Expand Police Hot-Spot Focus	41
4.2.1.2	Target Hardening Campaign with Public Subsidies for Security Related purchases by individuals and businesses	42
4.2.1.3	Anti Domestic Violence Initiative	43
4.2.1.4	Introduction of Repeat Offender Unit.....	44
4.2.2	Medium Term Strategies (24-36 month impact time)	45
4.2.2.1	Early Identification of and Intervention with Critical ‘At-risk’ teenagers.	45
4.2.2.2	Drug & Alcohol Abuse Treatment and Pro-active Enforcement of Alcohol Laws	46
4.2.2.3	Expansion of Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence	47
4.2.2.4	Acceleration of Police Reform and Modernization (better trained, IT upgrades; better forensics; newer crime mgmt techniques).....	47
4.2.2.5	Improved tracking of Youth and Domestic Violence within and among the Education, Health and Police Services	48
4.2.3	Long Term Strategies (36 month + impact time).....	49
4.2.3.1	After-school Programs & Week-end Programs for ‘At-Risk’ young persons	49
4.2.3.2	Parental Training & Support.....	50
4.2.3.3	Continued Promotion of Responsible Reproductive Health.....	51
4.2.3.4	Strengthen and Reshape Police Community Consultative Committees	52
4.2.3.5	“Focused” Rehabilitation Efforts.....	53
4.3	Summary of Themes of National Plan.....	53

1 Introduction & Methodology

This report represents a Diagnostic of Citizen Safety in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, undertaken on behalf of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The key objectives of this report are to:

1. Analyze statistical data and other information to determine trends and patterns in crime and violence over time in the Bahamas, commenting on the appropriateness, utilization and completeness of such information and possible methods for improving such information capture and use.
2. Examine the range of studies on crime and violence and related public and community responses to crime, assessing the efficacy of these efforts.
3. Review promising initiatives within the country that seek to address the issues of crime and violence, with emphasis on the means for improving the impact of such undertakings when applicable
4. Make recommendations on short, medium and long term strategies for addressing the most critical crime and violence issues within the country.

The methodology underlying this report and analysis drew on statistics provided by the Police Force, Department of Statistics, and select public sector agencies to establish an historical and current assessment of the reality of crime and violence within the Bahamas. This approach was intended to establish clear trends and to formulate priorities for intervention based on evidence, as opposed to conjecture.

Where statistical information was not available or relevant in respect to The Bahamas, key local practitioners and professionals have consulted to render expert opinions or estimates on the prevailing situation. Some thirty such professionals from a wide range of public and social sector disciplines were interviewed at length and have provided valuable information and assessments in regard to the issue of citizen safety in The Bahamas.

Key public agencies consulted for this report included: The Royal Bahamas Police Force, The Department of Social Services, The Ministry of Education, The Department of Public Health, The Department of Statistics, and The Urban Renewal Commission.

Within Bahamian civil society, significant insights were gleaned from organizations such as the Crisis Center, YEAST, Bahamas Association for Social Health, and The Haven.

Also consulted and referenced have been other local reports and studies undertaken within the last fifteen years on various elements of social situations in the Bahamas.

To provide a legitimate basis for recommendations moving forward, considerable review was undertaken on studies of what has worked in crime prevention elsewhere, the aim of which has been to determine which strategies could be adopted in the Bahamian setting and which local entities to undertake same.

2 Patterns of Crime and Violence in The Bahamas

This section examines the statistics on crime and violence in the Bahamas since the 1960s as collected by the Police Force and other public and private authorities. It reviews patterns in crime over time and seeks to make a determination on the trends requiring most critical attention and response.

2.1.1 Reported Crime in The Bahamas – An Historical Perspective: 1963-2002

This subsection examines the information compiled by the Royal Bahamas Police Force from 1963 through to 2002, keying in on clear trends and patterns of reported crime over this 45 year period.

2.1.1.1 Categories of Crime, Definitions and Methodology

The Royal Bahamas Police Force began keeping modern statistics on crime starting in 1963, breaking down its statistics into three broad categories:

- **Crimes against a Person** – These are what are termed violent crime, where a perpetrator interacts with another person or persons in the commission of a crime. Within this category are homicide, rape, assaults, and robberies. Both actual and attempted offenses are included in this category.
- **Crimes Against Property** – These are crimes involving the damage, destruction or unlawful use or removal of physical property and or other assets owned or controlled by an individual or entity. Sub-categories include theft, housebreaking, shopbreaking, fraud, and receipt of stolen goods.
- **Other Crimes** – These include a range of offenses that do not fit into the above major categories. Included in this category are crimes such as drug possession and distribution, possession of unlicensed firearms and vagrancy.

To allow for equitable comparisons over time, the information on crime is presented in a per capita format, showing crimes per 100,000 residents. This methodology is consistent with international norms for compiling and assessing crime statistics.

Further, to provide for a more balanced assessment, the charts and tables used in this section for comparison generally compare the average per capita rate over a particular five year period, beginning with the period of 1963 to 1967. This attempts to limit the effect of a particular crime spate in a given year that may have been attributable to a single person (i.e. serial rapist or killer) or group of persons (gang war or single gang of armed robbers.)

The actual crime statistics by specific classification and population counts for the respective years are located in Annex I of this report.

2.1.1.2 A Snapshot of Crime since 1963

Table 1. Crime Trend Analysis - Five Year Averages
(per 100,000 Residents)

	Five Year Averages Per 100,000 Residents							
Major Categories	1963- 1967	1968- 1972	1973- 1977	1978- 1982	1983- 1987	1988- 1992	1993- 1997	1998- 2002
All Crimes	2,565.0	3,854.1	5,401.7	5,670.7	5,969.3	6,601.6	7,134.1	5,586.1
Crimes Against Person	113.8	167.2	451.4	564.3	492.0	751.1	943.7	600.5
Crimes Against Property	1,969.7	2,818.6	3,994.2	4,342.7	4,588.0	5,070.0	5,494.6	4,393.1
Selected Classifications								
Homicide	7.2	8.1	9.6	12.4	11.7	15.4	15.9	19.4
Sexual Offenses	27.1	44.4	69.1	84.8	68.1	123.1	176.7	135.1
Robberies and Attempted Robberies	35.4	80.7	202.2	294.4	315.7	512.0	588.8	375.2
Stealing, Breaking & Entering	1,777.4	2,421.5	3,573.4	3,936.2	4,127.1	4,383.7	4,440.3	2,181.1
Drug Offenses	3.2	88.6	248.9	388.9	483.1	379.1	303.3	477.8
Possession of Unlicensed Firearms	27.6	36.2	39.1	45.4	60.0	27.6	49.1	30.4
<i>Source: Royal Bahamas Police Force & Department of Statistics</i>								

A brief glance at Table 1 indicates the rapid and sustained increase in criminal activity since the mid 1960s. Comparing the most recent five year period under review (1998 to 2002) to the first period listed (1963-1967), the following observations are readily discernable:

- Overall, the current reported crime rate is almost double that of the mid 1960s
- For the category of crimes against the person, the reported increase is more than five fold.
- The homicide rate has more than doubled.
- The rate of reported sexual offenses is almost five times higher than in the mid-1960s
- The rate of reported robberies and attempted robberies has increased almost 10 times from the first period under review to the last.
- The rate of drug related arrests during the last five year period reviewed were on average 150 times higher than they were for the period of 1963 to 1968.
- Notwithstanding the above, the rates of reported crime has been declining steadily within the five years in particular, the overall rate being down some 22 percent from the peak period of 1993-1997.

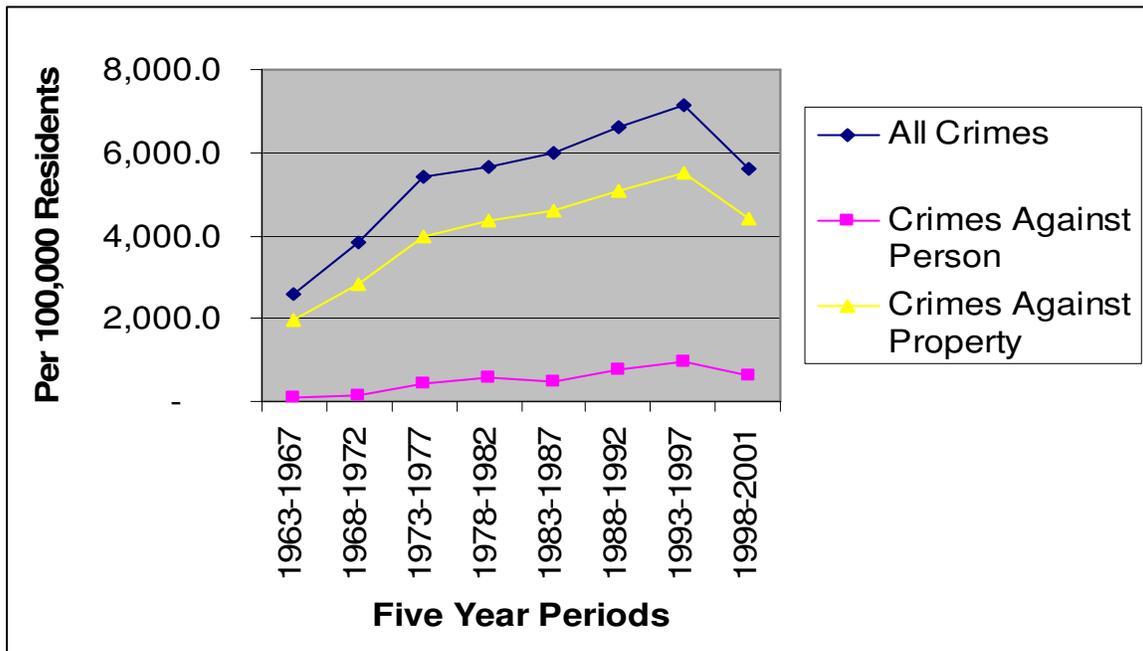
It is important to highlight the fact that these figures represent *reported* incidents only. Accordingly, the analysis within this section must be tempered by the realization that

police methodology and consistency in reporting crimes may have changed significantly within the period under review.

Also, the propensity of citizens to reporting crime would have likely changed over the same period. Some Bahamian commentators express an opinion that residents over time have become less inclined to report small property crimes – given the perception that capture of suspects and retrieval of items are highly unlikely; at the same time, they point to the fact that women in particular are more likely now than before to report sexual offenses and abuse given the ever lower cultural tolerances to these offenses and the higher social expectations and opportunities available to women. If these observations are accurate, this would mean - from a comparative standpoint - an overstatement of the current underlying situation for some offenses and an understatement for others.

Figure 1 readily illustrates the trends in the major crime categories over the forty-five year period under review. The ten year period beginning in 1968 showed the most pronounced growth in criminal activity. Although still steadily increasing, the average rate of growth moderated somewhat during the period of 1978 to 1987, beginning another rapid ascent for the ten year period ending 1997.

Figure 1. Crime trends, five year averages



Over the final five years under review (1997-1998), the reported crime rate declined most notably in the area of property crimes. Yet even with this decline, the crime rate in the Bahamas remains extremely high both in comparison to our recent history and to that of other countries reviewed for this study (see section 2.1.3). Further, the downward trend in

the broad categories mask some startling movements in specific categories which most impact upon citizen safety.

2.1.1.3 Trends in Violent Crimes: Specific Classifications

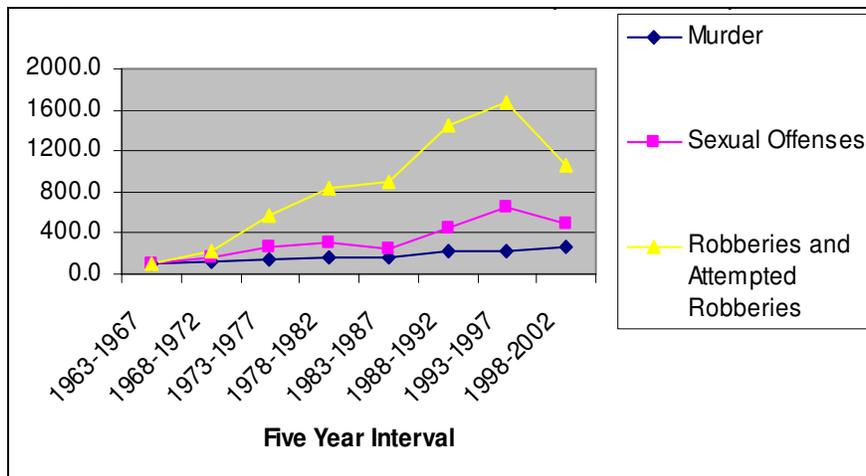
Most troubling for any society are violent crimes – those crimes which lead to death or serious physical or psychological trauma for the victims.

To examine the increase in these types of offenses, the following classification of crimes were analyzed specifically to determine past and recent trends:

- Homicide
- Sexual Offenses – for purposes of this study meaning attempted and actual rape, sexual assaults, incest and statutory rape
- Robberies and Attempted Robberies - including armed and other robberies where money or other items were unlawfully taken in a person on person confrontation.

Among these three groups of offenses, the most notable increase is in attempted and actual robberies, where the average rate over the last five years is over 1000 percent higher than in the mid-1960s. For sexual offenses the percentage increase is just under 500 percent. The average homicide rate is two and one half times that of the initial five year period under review.

Figure 2. Violent Crime Growth Rates (1963-68=100)



In absolute terms, the growth in property crimes has contributed most substantially to the growth in the overall reported crime numbers. Indeed, 77 percent of all crimes reported within the last five year period were property crimes.

However, from a growth rate perspective, clearly it is the average increase in the number of violent crimes that is most noteworthy. Overall, crime during the period of 1998 to 2002 was 218 percent higher than the period of 1963-1968. One would note that the growth in property crimes almost mirrors the growth in overall crime. However, the

increase in reported violent crimes – or crimes against the person – is 528 percent, or five times that of the mid-1960s.

Table 2. Crime Growth Rates
Base Period: Years 1963-1968=100

Categories	Five Year Intervals							
	1963-1967	1968-1972	1973-1977	1978-1982	1983-1987	1988-1992	1993-1997	1998-2002
All Crimes	100	150	211	221	233	257	278	218
Crimes Against Person	100	147	397	496	432	660	830	528
Crimes Against Property	100	143	203	220	233	257	279	223

Source: Royal Bahamas Police Force & Department of Statistics

2.1.2 A Geographical Comparison: New Providence & Grand Bahama vs. Family Islands

The population of The Bahamas, according to the 2000 Census, stands at just over 300,000 residents. Sixty percent (60%) of the population lives on the island of New Providence, home to the capital city of Nassau. Another fifteen percent (15%) live on the island of Grand Bahama, home to the “second city” of Freeport.

Table 3. Crime Statistics: New Providence v. Grand Bahama v. Family Islands (1999-2001)

Major Categories	Average Per 100,000: Years 1999-2001				% Variance from Nat Avg		
	New Prov	G Bah	Fam Isls	National	NP	GB	FI
All Crimes	6,268.8	4,328.9	1,765.5	5,289.6	18.5%	18.2%	-66.6%
Crimes Against Person	668.9	392.2	107.7	541.5	23.5%	27.6%	-80.1%
Crimes Against Property	4,795.3	3,324.5	1,277.7	4,037.2	18.8%	17.7%	-68.4%
Selected Classifications							
Homicide	22.9	13.5	9.5	19.4	18.0%	30.6%	-51.3%
Sexual Offenses	339.8	129.1	5.1	256.7	32.4%	49.7%	-98.0%
Robberies and Attempted Robberies	70.8	45.4	37.1	61.8	14.6%	26.6%	-39.9%

Stealing, Breaking & Entering	3,386.3	2,755.0	1,014.9	2,930.9	15.5%	-6.0%	-65.4%
Drug Offenses	122.5	44.0	23.3	95.4	28.4%	53.9%	-75.6%
Possession of Unlicensed Firearms	3.3	5.0	3.6	3.6	-8.4%	37.0%	0.5%

The remaining 15 percent of the population are scattered over approximately 20 major islands and a number of small cays, referred to within the Bahamas as the ‘Family Islands’. Persons within the Family Islands tend to live in small township communities, commonly referred to as settlements.

Figure 3. Crime: Per capita Averages 1999-2001

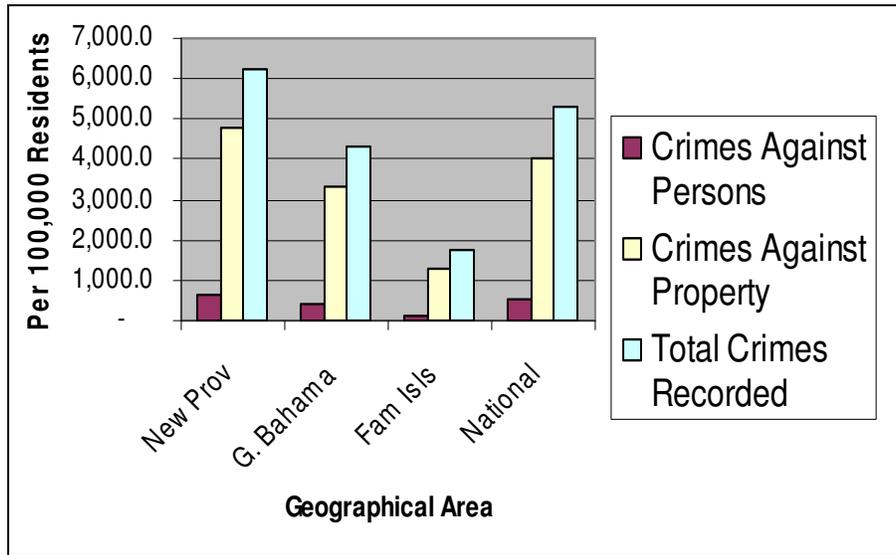


Figure 3 shows the average per capita crime rates for selected crime categories for the period of 1998-2001. For all crimes, the rate for New Providence is three times higher than in the Family Islands; for violent crimes, there is a five-fold difference.

The crime rate in Grand Bahama - while significantly below that of New Providence in most categories - still is high in comparison to other international locales. For homicide, 9.5 per 100,000 would rank Grand Bahama above the national rate for Barbados over a similar period.

Thus, in respect to crime and violence in The Bahamas, one can reasonably suggest that there are elements of the urban environment that encourages or facilitates a higher degree of lawlessness. Also, there may be lessons to learn from the Family Island institutional and community environment that can be incorporated into strategies and policies for crime management in the urban centers of The Bahamas.

Caution though that Family Islands may indicate some level of under-reporting in certain areas. Police do report high suspected levels of statutory sexual offenses and incest,

which may go unreported because of the high levels of informal social sanctions related to small isolated communities.¹

2.1.3 The Bahamas and the World: A Comparison of Statistics on Reported Violence

Determination of the severity of any crime and violence situation must, of necessity, take place from a frame of reference. The sub-sections above would establish that in historical context, crime today in The Bahamas is much higher than it had been for the corresponding period forty years ago.

But another point of reference is geographical: How does The Bahamas compare to countries, both similar and dissimilar, in respect to crime and violence? Establishing this relationship provides a basis of establishing the relative safety of Bahamian citizens and residents to their counterparts around the world.

One would note that comparisons of official statistics on crime and violence between countries is difficult due to differences in the competency of recording agencies, in how offenses are characterized, and even in the relative propensity of residents of different countries to report crime.

Thus, given the focus of this report on violence issues and the apparent relative similarity in definition of homicide across the countries noted, the rates of this offense has been compared between The Bahamas and other English speaking countries, as well as selected developed countries.

Table 4. Average Homicide Per 100,000 (1998-2000), Selected Countries*

	<i>Caribbean Countries</i>					<i>Other</i>			
	<i>Bahamas</i>	<i>T&T</i>	<i>Barbados</i>	<i>Guyana</i>	<i>Jamaica</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>Canada</i>
Homicide	18.37	10.64	7.85	17.71	40.63	1.95	3.27	5.98	4.12

**The three year period average is different for some countries noted, but all fall within the late 1990s to early 2000s*

Source: Interpol Statistics

¹ Interview with Acting Superintendent Clarence Russel, Officer in charge of Abaco, one of the Family Islands

For the listed countries, the Bahamas falls only second to Jamaica for homicide rates over the mentioned period. The differential in the homicide rate is particularly significant when compared to the developed countries noted in the right hand columns of the table. Further, the Bahamas tends to rank high in a range of violent and criminal offenses when compared to other countries – although some of the differences may be exaggerated or understated due to differences in recording and in the rates of reporting of offenses.

Yet, even if one were to base the comparisons on homicide alone, clearly the incidences of this offense give reason for alarm and cannot be easily dismissed as an international norm, caused by prevailing global factors.

2.1.4 A Declining Crime Rate? The Period of 1998-2002 Reviewed

Table 5. Crime Trends Per 100,000 Residents, 1998-2002

<i>Major Categories</i>	YEAR				
	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>
<i>All Crimes</i>	6400	5973	5382	4543	5544
<i>Crimes Against Person</i>	766	675	535	421	524
<i>Crimes Against Property</i>	5415	4584	4098	3440	4264
<i>Selected Classifications</i>					
<i>Homicide</i>	19	20	24	14	17
<i>Sexual Offenses</i>	160	126	118	135	184
<i>Robberies and Attempted Robberies</i>	460	459	336	243	320
<i>Stealing, Breaking & Entering</i>	3744	3408	2905	2385	3142
<i>Drug Offenses</i>	494	479	499	435	494
<i>Possession of Unlicensed Firearms</i>	21	26	27	47	35

Within the last five year period under review (1998-2002), there has been a notable decline in the overall crime rate, with reductions in both violent crimes and property crimes. Indeed, on a per capita basis, crime is at a twenty year low - with the most recent five year average for overall reported crimes comparable to the rate for the period of 1978-1982.

Within the period, the most dramatic decreases are noted in the category of Robberies and Attempted Robberies, where the 2002 figures are 30 percent below that of that for 1998. For Theft and Burglary, the reduction is 15 percent.

There are several likely reasons for the drop-off in the crime rate, which have been driven largely by reductions in robberies and theft. A key element of this would have been the fall in the unemployment rate (discussed in Section 2.2.2), which no doubt mitigated against the “need” to steal or rob for mere economic sustenance.

Senior police officers have pointed to greater focus and resource allocation by households and the commercial sector – especially within the last fifteen years - to the implementation of mechanisms to discourage and deter armed robberies, burglaries and theft. These “target-hardening” mechanisms include:

- a) the implementation of controlled access into commercial establishments²;
- b) the engagement of full-time security officers or security agencies;
- c) improvement in lighting in and around the establishments;
- d) installation of closed-circuit television and 24 hour off-site security monitoring
- e) Installation of security door and window features

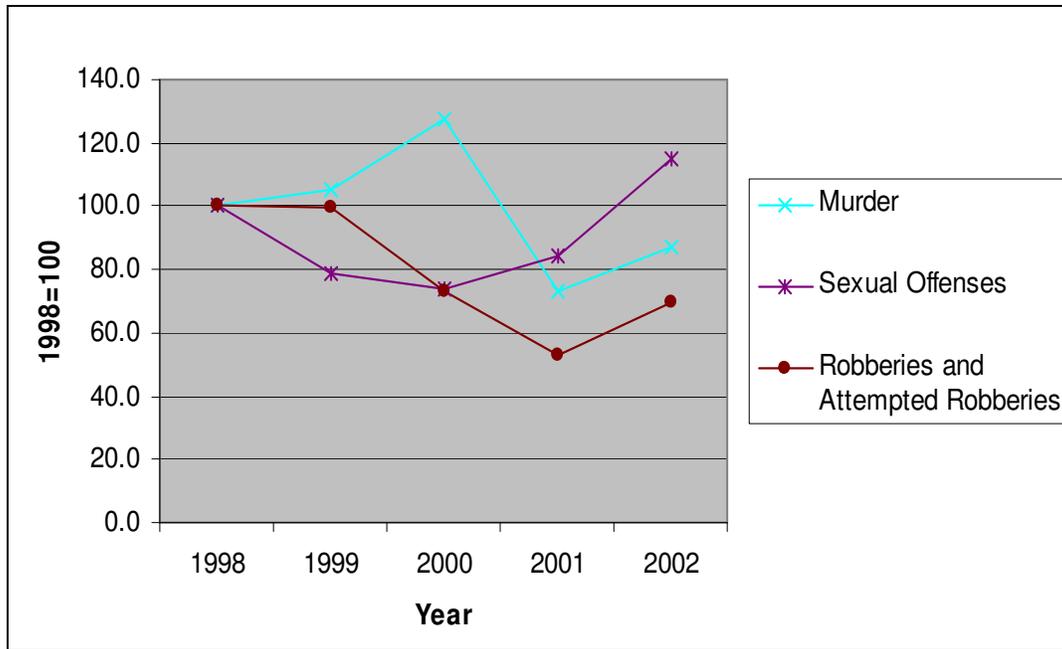
In essence, these ever expanding efforts may have combined to lower the opportunities for thefts and robberies, while at the same time increasing the risk factor for those seeking to engage in these activities.

Yet, although the overall crime rate is on the decline, the trend for violent crimes – aside from robbery – is relatively stable. The homicide rate has remained relatively steady over the five year period, hitting an all-time high in 2000. The rate of sexual offenses for 2002 (184 per 100,000) is higher than that of 1998 (160) – only one of a very few classifications where the rate for 2002 was higher than that for 1998.

Overall, the last five years have served to demonstrate that all sectors are responding to the issue of crime, indicating a degree of public awareness and a preparedness to address pro-actively the issue of crime. Still, many violent types of crime have yet to respond to current methodologies and strategies. Also, even where there have been notable declines in particular classifications, these rates are still high when compared to other countries within and outside of the region (See Section 2.1.3).

Figure 4. Crime Trends 1998-2002

² Many retail establishments and professional offices have remote locking systems for the entrance doors that must be released by an employee of the establishment to permit customers to enter.



Essentially, the most recent five year period indicates a promising start in the process of reversing spiraling rates of crimes and violence. Yet, it is clear that it is only a start. The lessons learned from the gains made must be identified to permit replication and expansion of efforts. Additionally, greater attention must be paid to short and medium term strategies for mitigating violent crimes such as homicide and sexual offenses – crimes, that have to date been more resistant to current crime management strategies.

2.1.5 When Crime happens?

Superintendent Hulan Hanna, officer responsible for Community Policing, notes that the key times for violent crime throughout The Bahamas is the period of Thursday evening to Sunday evening, with peaks in holidays.³

He notes that Fridays are particularly troublesome, given the fact that weekly salaried workers have “money in their pockets and are ready to blow off some steam”.⁴ Usually, reports of domestic violence incidents begin to climb after 6 p.m. Reports of Armed Robberies involving commercial establishments and reports of violent injuries at social events peaks between 8 p.m. to midnight; street robbery of individuals tend to happen from midnight onward, as bandits set upon salaried workers walking home, usually with their week’s salaries on them. This trend is much the same on Saturday evening and tapers off on Sundays. Superintendent Hanna notes that Monday and Tuesday are “virtually crime free” days of the week in respect to violent incidents.

³ Interview with Superintendent Hanna, January 2004

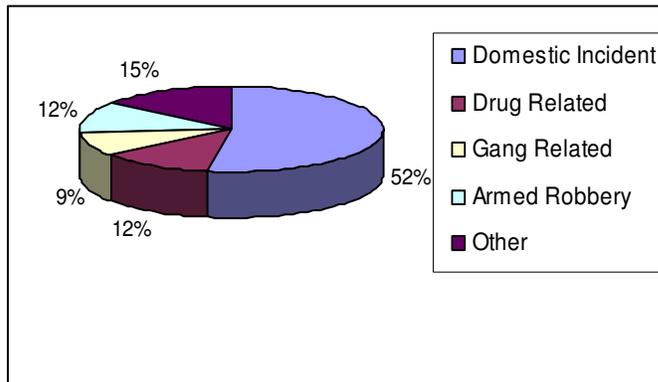
⁴ *Ibid*

2.2 The Socio-economics of Crime and Violence in The Bahamas

This subsection examines the underlying socio-economic factors of crime in the Bahamas. It looks at key groups of perpetrators and victims, to determine how best to shape priorities for intervention strategies. It attempts to discern the possible relationships between factors such as family and community structure, employment and other social factors that tend to facilitate or mitigate against the incidence of crime and violence within the Bahamas.

2.2.1 Domestic Violence and Child Abuse: A pressing concern

Figure 5. Established Motive for Murder Years 2001/2002



The fact that for years 2001 and 2002 combined, the Police reported that domestic incidents led to 52 percent of the murders recorded in The Bahamas⁵ is perhaps the clearest indication of how much a priority the issue of domestic violence must be to any meaningful discussion on mitigation the level of overall violence over time.

The prevalence of physical abuse of women and children in domestic situations is also evident, although the evidence to support this is anecdotal and based on “injury” reports at the hospitals.

The causes and processing driving these offenses are dynamic and complex. Most challenging is the cultural acceptance of many elements of this violence, with some perpetrators and victims rationalizing intimate-relationship violence through reference to their religious convictions, or to viewpoints about the intensity and validity of the love of the perpetrator to the victim. With widespread acceptance of corporal punishment as an appropriate form of discipline of children, parents and guardians who step over the line into serious physical abuse often do not perceive their actions as excessive.

Table 6. Cases Referred to the Department of Public Health Child Abuse and Neglect Unit

Year	Female	Male	Total	Of Which: Family Island Cases
2001	208	19	227	4
2002	274	35	309	6

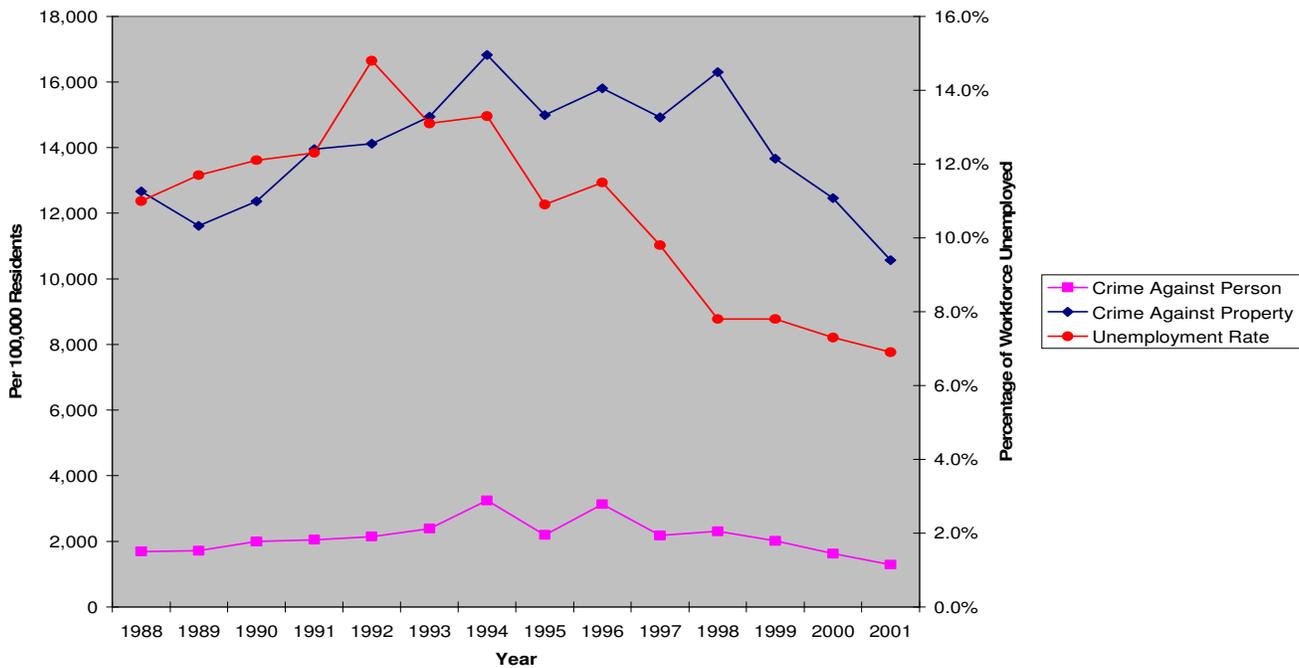
N.B. Cases of Children referred for physical or sexual abuse
Source: SCAN Unit

⁵ Source: The Royal Bahamas Police Force Reports, 2001 & 2002.

Currently, the way that the law is structured in The Bahamas, the victim is required to press charges in the case of domestic battery. Given the reliance oftentimes of the victims on the perpetrators for financial or emotional support – or even at times for fear of violent retaliation – too few victims are willing to bring charges up against their intimate partners.

2.2.2 Crime and Unemployment.

Figure 6. Crime and Unemployment



Examining the period of 1994 to 2001, unemployment levels fell substantially as the economy of the Bahamas witnessed extended and sustained growth.⁶ Over the same period, property crime levels in particular also witnessed a correspondingly significant drop – to a near twenty-year low. These indicators would back up the intuitive notion that idleness and economic deprivation may influence decisions to engage in crime: When persons have nothing to do and no income to sustain themselves, the temptation to steal to get what they need certainly is heightened.

2.2.3 Vulnerable Communities: Crime and Violence in the ‘Over-The-Hill’ Neighborhoods

⁶ Department of Statistics reports indicate an average 3.5 percent average annual growth of the economy during that period

Table 7. New Providence Crime Statistics by Division, 2002
Percentage of Crimes Reported within Individual New Providence Divisions

	New Providence Police Divisions							Total	C+NE+S*
	Central	North Eastern	Southern	Western	Carmichael	South Eastern	Eastern		
Violent Crimes									
Homicide	7.1%	26.2%	16.7%	7.1%	7.1%	31.0%	4.8%	100%	50.0%
Attempted Homicide	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	100%	66.7%
Rape	21.9%	17.1%	22.9%	9.5%	12.4%	10.5%	5.7%	100%	61.9%
Attempted Rape	25.8%	16.1%	29.0%	0.0%	9.7%	12.9%	6.5%	100%	71.0%
Unlawful Sexual Intercourse	11.9%	15.1%	34.1%	0.0%	7.1%	25.4%	6.3%	100%	61.1%
Armed Robbery	19.9%	23.0%	30.6%	4.2%	8.1%	9.3%	5.1%	100%	73.4%
Robbery	24.1%	20.7%	32.8%	2.3%	8.6%	8.6%	2.9%	100%	77.6%
Attempted Robbery	13.6%	18.2%	27.3%	9.1%	0.0%	18.2%	13.6%	100%	59.1%
Sub Total	19.4%	21.2%	29.9%	4.0%	8.3%	12.1%	5.1%	100%	70.5%
Property Crimes									
Burglary	6.7%	24.8%	33.3%	2.4%	5.5%	21.2%	6.1%	100%	64.8%
Housebreaking	12.5%	19.7%	18.6%	4.1%	15.5%	13.3%	16.4%	100%	50.8%
Shopbreaking	26.4%	25.7%	23.8%	3.7%	10.0%	8.1%	2.3%	100%	75.9%
Stealing	24.3%	19.7%	17.8%	11.5%	8.6%	11.7%	6.5%	100%	61.8%
Stealing from Vehicle	19.1%	24.2%	13.7%	6.3%	10.9%	18.8%	7.0%	100%	57.0%
Stolen Vehicle	15.8%	19.1%	15.5%	9.3%	18.1%	13.4%	8.8%	100%	50.4%
Attempted Breaking	19.8%	21.2%	15.3%	6.3%	11.7%	16.7%	9.0%	100%	56.3%
Attempted Stealing	28.3%	20.0%	11.7%	10.0%	10.0%	5.0%	15.0%	100%	60.0%
Sub Total	20.1%	21.4%	18.1%	7.5%	11.4%	13.1%	8.3%	100%	59.6%
TOTAL	20.0%	21.4%	19.7%	7.1%	11.0%	13.0%	7.9%	100%	61.1%

*C+NE+S: Aggregate of Central, North Eastern and Southern Divisions

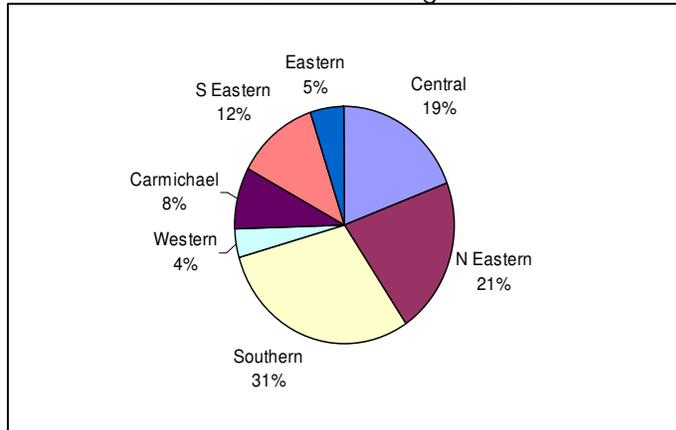
As Section 2.1.2 indicates, the large majority of reported crime and violence takes place in New Providence, home to the capital city of Nassau. On the island, however, there are clear indications that a disproportionate number of many offenses occur within specific areas of the island – most notably in the older, lower socio-economic communities of the islands. In local parlance, these are referred to as the ‘over the hill’ neighbourhoods and they are characterized by high population densities, poor housing stocks, higher unemployment rates and limited basic infrastructure.⁷

Looking at the year 2002, just over 70 percent of violent crimes (crimes against person) occurred in Central, Southern and North-Eastern Divisions, in which reside the ‘over the hill’ communities. The Southern division itself registered 30 percent – or almost one third - of all violent crimes reported in New Providence during the period. By comparison, the suburban areas of New Providence, policed by the Eastern, Carmichael and Western divisions, together accounted for 17.4 percent of violent crimes.

⁷ When compared to other area of the islands, these areas tend to have lower levels of basic infrastructure and amenities. For example, many homes in the area do not have indoor water closets, and residents must rely on outdoor toilet facilities.

Available statistics indicate that these inner city areas account for a disproportionate number of violent and other offenses relative to their population. Available statistics

Figure 7. Violent Crimes in New Providence by division



show that while the inner city areas policed by the Central, Southern and North-Eastern divisions account for 40 percent of the island's population, they recorded 71 percent of the violent crimes in 2002.⁸

Clearly, the victimization rates for those within the lower socio-economic brackets are higher than for more affluent Bahamian residents. From a resource deployment and crime management perspective, the inner

city of New Providence is *the* crime “hot-spot” within the country. It is in these areas where priority attention should be placed – in terms of both police action and civic attention.

2.2.4 The changing family structure and its impact on child and adolescent socialization

The Bahamas has showed a movement away from the traditional nuclear family over the last 30 years. Today, it is estimated that close to 70 percent of children are born to single mothers, where the proportion was the reverse three decades ago. Over the 15 year period of 1986 to 2000, some fifteen percent of all live births on average were to young women aged ten to nineteen, almost all of whom were single at the time.⁹

This creates a scenario where the large majority of children within the country do not have the benefit of two parents within the home. Further, a large proportion of these children are for mothers who are adolescents and very young adults.

These young, single mothers then are required in many cases to carry the full burden of parenthood, very often with little or no economic or parenting support from the father of the children. Moreover, faced with the economic demands of single-parenthood, many mothers seek to work long hours to secure a livelihood for themselves and their children,

⁸ This estimate was garnered from information kept by the Department of Statistics. However, because the department does not keep population information by Police Division, significant estimates have been made.

⁹ From Department of Public Health's *Vital Statistics Report, 2001*

Table 8. Estimates of Births
Among Bahamian Teenagers,
1986-2000

Year	Age 10-19 Years		
	No. of live births	% Total Births	Rate/1000 Females
1986	954	16.5	33.9
1987	908	16.7	30.2
1988	971	16.9	31.7
1989	957	15.6	30.7
1990	932	15.3	35.3
1991	860	13.8	32.8
1992	1008	14.9	38.6
1993	994	14.9	38.3
1994	890	14.6	34.3
1995	845	13.5	32.5
1996	819	13.9	31.4
1997	807	13.4	30.8
1998	751	12.8	28.4
1999	685	12.8	25.6
2000	674	12.7	24.5
Average	870	14.6	31.9
Total	13055		

Source: Vital Statistics Report, 2000
- Department of Health

again leading to less time for active parenting.

Many Bahamian commentators point to this phenomena as a “root cause” of the crime problem. They note that children are too often born to a mother who lacks the support of the father and who, herself - because of age, home environment and lack of employable skill sets – is ill equipped to handle the demands and pressures of parenthood.

These analysts argue that the children born into these situations very often do not obtain the requisite care and attention necessary for successful socialization into the broader Bahamian community. This manifests itself in higher levels of social deviance, violent tendencies and emotional instability.

Very little analysis has been done in The Bahamas to date to examine the full nature of the link between family structure and propensity for criminal enterprise. Nonetheless, given the changes in the family structure within the country over the last thirty years, attention should be given to further studying the

Table 9. Single Family Households

YEAR	% of Households Headed by Single Parent
2003	28.7%
2000	26.3%
1995	25.8%
1990	23.3%
1986	22.1%

Source: Department of Statistics

phenomena and, in the interim, providing focused support to initiatives that support parent skills development, infant and early childhood intervention and responsible reproductive health.

2.2.5 Who’s committing the crimes? Key perpetrators

The primary actors behind the violent offenses are males from the inner-city environment of New Providence and Grand Bahama. They represent a hugely disproportionate share of perpetrators of homicide, sexual offenses and armed robbery.¹⁰

¹⁰ Interview with Supt. Hulan Hanna, January 2004

The National Youth and Crime Reports provided extensive investigation into the causes of this phenomenon. They detailed the dysfunctional home and neighborhood environments characterized by limited positive parental interaction, unstructured living habits, and poor role models within the community. Also noted were the high levels of drug and alcohol abuse and an inefficient criminal justice system that would at times allow potentially dangerous suspects out on bail for extended periods of time while awaiting trial.

In addition to the points highlighted in those reports, several commentators have pointed out that the current educational and social service delivery systems do not permit sufficient early intervention for ‘at-risk’ children and their caretakers; nor is there sufficient tracking of ‘problem’ children throughout their educational career to allow for isolation and remediation as the ‘problem’ child heads toward serious trouble.¹¹

Other processes that facilitate the high levels of violence is the growth in youth gang activity, where young men from disadvantaged areas in particular find it necessary to affiliate themselves with a particular gang for “protection.” These gang affiliations tend to be geographic in nature, with young men from a particular neighbourhood or community banding together. The gang structures themselves tend to be loose and fluid, tending to random, but violent turf warfare more than organized criminal activity or syndication. The Police reported that 17 percent of the homicides in 2001 were gang-related, and usually related to retribution for some actual or perceived wrong by gang members to a rival gang member. For violent assaults, the Police estimate that gang fighting is responsible for a much higher proportion of incidents.¹²

Youth Health Indicators
National Youth Health Survey, 1997

The percentage (%) of students who reported the following:

- ❖ 12 percent reported attempting suicide
- ❖ 32 percent reported drinking alcohol in past year
- ❖ 6 percent reported smoking marijuana in past year
- ❖ 22 percent reported being physically abused
- ❖ 13 percent reported being sexually abused
- ❖ 13 percent reported that they carried a

2.2.6 Contributing Factors: Drugs & Alcohol

The Safe Bahamas business report references the fact that a majority of inmates indicated that they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the commission of their

¹¹ Interviewees for this report including Jeffery Lloyd, Director of YEAST; Jimmy Campbell; Chairman of Safe Bahamas and Nurse Althea Neilly, Coordinator of SCAN all made reference to these deficiencies within the intervention system for at-risk young persons.

¹² Interview with Hulan Hanna, Superintendent of Police responsible for Community Relations, December 2003

offense. The 1997 welfare survey of teenagers undertaken by the Department of Health showed that 33 percent of teenagers had drunk alcohol within the previous year.

While no formal study has been done to establish a relationship between drug abuse and criminality in The Bahamas, both the Police Force and related professionals agree that drugs - most notably, alcohol – is a contributing factor in many unplanned violent offenses, especially at parties and other social events. They agree that the ease of access to alcohol by under-aged drinkers is particularly troubling.¹³ These factors may explain why the rates of violence crimes tend to increase on Friday and Saturday evenings, the times of the week where nighttime socializing and alcohol consumption are at their peak.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis: Reliability and Prospects

This subsection examines the nature and range of crime and violence related information captured by public agencies within the Bahamas – with emphasis on the reliability and usefulness of the information and detailing how data capture can be improved and incorporated more systematically and consistently to provide for more salient analysis and better incorporation of this analysis into policy development and execution.

2.3.1 Information Utilization in the Police Force

The Police Force began keeping records in the current format during the early 1960s. The summary annual information is culled from individual incident reports filed by Police Officers in the respective divisions and fed to a central unit dedicated to the recording and archiving of this information.

At this level, the challenge is in ensuring that the various offenses are properly classified by the reporting officer. The current “guidelines” tend to provide police officers with

¹³ The legal drinking age in The Bahamas is eighteen.

legalistic definitions of criminal offenses to guide their classification of reported crimes. These definitions usually employ jargon that is difficult to decipher for police officers unfamiliar with the legal field. This may translate into misclassification of certain offenses which can affect both perceptions of crime and strategies to mitigate same. Here, some effort should be placed in assuring that the classifications of crime are detailed in documented guidelines in a manner that is simple and concise – and that provides detailed explanations or examples where necessary. It is important too that the periodic auditing and evaluation be undertaken on reported crime

Within the last few years in particular, the Police have moved toward greater use of crime data in the day to day management of crime, and in the development of strategies to address specific concerns. One example is the current implementation of ‘hot-spotting’, where specific clusters of crime are mapped out geographically and on a time-series basis to determine trends and identify likely suspects. This effort appears to be in the early stage of development and current confidentiality policies make it difficult to assess how the information is integrated into immediate and medium term policing strategies.

In regard to Police Statistics, perhaps the most pressing adjustment to data collection and analysis is the need to better aggregate and analyze the demographic information of both perpetrators and victims. Currently, the Police captures this information in individual incident reports, but do not consolidate and aggregate this information to assess on a consistent basis the propensity for specific groups (i.e. youth, elderly, women, persons from certain areas) to be at higher risks for victimization– or to be more likely perpetrators of crime. Naturally, this also makes it difficult to determine the trends for these demographic groups: Are single young women from a specific inner city more likely now than five years ago to be victims of sexual assault or domestic abuse? Are young men from that same area less likely to engage in gang-related violence?

It is evident that elements of this information set are captured in one form or the other. It is unclear however, the extent to which this information is consolidated and incorporated into policing strategies and crime management policies for the near or extended term. Accordingly, it will be helpful moving forward to examine how demographic and social information captured by the Police can be better utilized to track trends in victimization and perpetration. This will help both the Police and social agencies better specify and redress specific issues or problem areas.

2.3.2 Information Utilization in Other Public Agencies

Aside from the Police, the principal agencies for capturing information on crime and violence issues include the public health agencies, the social services departments, the school system, and the correctional institutions. All with the possible exception of the correctional facilities are particularly important in providing information that can help

relevant actors intervene to address high risk cases that tend to go unreported or underreported to the Police. Stated another way, the manner in which these agencies use and share information can provide a critical link in stopping cycles of violence and in preventing particular violent offenses in the first instant.

The public health agencies can be particularly important sources for tracking the number of potential cases of child and partner abuse. In recent years, a relationship has been forged between these agencies and the Crisis Centre - an NGO geared toward mitigation of domestic and sexual violence - where health care professionals voluntarily refer suspected cases to the Centre for intervention. In the case of suspected child abuse, the cases are referred to the SCAN unit, a public sector agency that coordinates the efforts of entities that deal with the welfare of abused children.

Yet it is unclear as to whether information capture has been designed within the health care system to identify and track cases of injuries resulting from violent encounters – and also, as to the nature of information sharing between related public agencies. Here, the emphasis need not be on simply aggregating information to determine social trends. More importantly, here it is critical to establish individual case information to assure that potential victims are identified as early as possible for appropriate interventions.

For example, clear arrangements for the transfer of information on suspected violence between the health and the social service departments can permit the latter to identify specific priority cases for early intervention. It will also allow the social service agencies to compare home accounts of domestic welfare against what is being identified in the health care centres.

As for the Education authorities, the issue lies with violence within the schools. Currently, the Police are called in for instances involving weapons or when persons from outside the school communities comes on to campus to threaten or participate in violent or criminal activity. Outside of this, all other violent incidents are recorded at the school level and are not reported to the central Education department.

Here again, attention ought to be given to how school violence information is captured and utilized. Besides the obvious need to determine the relative levels of student safety and welfare throughout the system and related trends over time, the sharing of information between the Education department and the social welfare agencies can provide for the establishment of individual juvenile case profiles, permitting family and other appropriate interventions before the at-risk young person moves on to more serious offenses.

Naturally, for the aforementioned suggestions to be effective, the department of social services must ensure that its organizational structure and information databases permit the types of integrated information flows noted above. The recording of case information is still largely manual; even where there is electronic data storage; there is no comprehensive database that permits data sharing, consolidation or analysis.¹⁴ As crime

¹⁴ Interview with Kim Sawyer, Officer in The Department of Social Services, March 2004

mitigation policies are being developed refined, an important element in success of any sustained initiative will be the ability of the welfare and social services departments to track, monitor and analyze case information at the individual and aggregate levels.

2.3.3 Improving Informatics to Improve Citizen Safety: Summary Recommendations

Among the relevant public agencies there exists a tremendous amount of information on various aspects of crime, violence and victimization. In many cases, the quantity and quality of information are at acceptable levels. Yet, the challenge moving forward is how best to make use of this information in a way that mitigate victimization and mitigation of crime and violence. Based on the assessment above, the following recommendations may be considered:

- ***Aggregation of Police Demographic Information:*** The Police capture a significant amount of demographic information on the victims and perpetrators of crime. To better assist immediate case investigations and longer term law enforcement and social sector policies, more effort should be place on aggregating and analyzing information on victims and perpetrators. More effective and precise strategies can be shaped by assessing what ages, what neighborhoods, what ethnic groups, what genders, are impacted by specific types of crime. Further, it is important to continually determine what situational factors (alcohol, pay days) impact or are impacted by crime and violence.
- ***Establishment of Information Exchange Committee between relevant social agencies:*** The agencies which oversee public health, education and social services, along with any other appropriate public welfare entities, should establish a committee to examine and propose policies for information capture and exchange between and among these agencies. The committee would also be responsible for the execution and maintenance of these policies and make recommendations on public agencies – individually or collectively – can improve their data sets. The aim of this committee would be to ensure that critical information on high-risk situations are passed along to the responsible entity to permit early and sustained inventions.

2.4 Assessment of Crime Trends – A Summary

Based on the information detailed above, it is not surprising that crime and violence in The Bahamas is characterized by leaders from all sectors as the most pressing social concern in the country.

From an historical standpoint, crime rates in almost every category have increased several fold over the last forty years. Even with the decline noted within the last five year period, the rates remain very high by historical standards. In comparison to its

neighbors within the region, The Bahamas leads or is close to leading in a wide range of reported violent and criminal activities.

Even more critical, it is violent crimes that have showed both the most dramatic increase over time, and which, with the exception of robbery, seem most resistant to crime measures employed thus far.

Yet, even so, it is important to recognize that crime in the Bahamas is better described as a national *urban* problem, given the fact that in both relative and absolute terms, it is New Providence and Grand Bahama - the major population centres - that account for the vast majority of reported crime and violence. And in New Providence, the evidence strongly suggests that the inner city areas represent the major portion of the crime and violence problem.

Within the smaller communities of the Bahamian Family Islands, there is anecdotal evidence and professional opinion that suggests strongly that partner and child sexual and physical abuse is significantly under-reported due to cultural norms and increased sensitivity to social sanctions. Therefore, it is more difficult in these locales to obtain an appreciation of the situation. Given the evidence however, policy efforts must consider strategies to encourage reporting and treatment of domestic and child sexual and physical violence in these islands.

Within the last five years, there has been a promising downward trend in reported crime. This trend is likely the result of the increase in police resources and implementation of new management strategies, the heightened emphasis on the “target-hardening” of properties, and greater focus of civil society on crime and violence issues and programs. The promise represented by this trend is tempered though with the reality that rates of many violent offenses are still at or near all time highs. From a policy perspective, priority attention must therefore be placed on refining and implementing mechanisms that can begin to address those violent crimes so far resistant to current strategies.

The keys findings from the assessment of crime statistics are thus as follows:

- ❖ The crime rate in the Bahamas can be characterized as high, both from an historical perspective and when compared to other countries within and beyond the region;
- ❖ Crime in the Bahamas tends to be an urban phenomena, affecting New Providence and Grand Bahama much more than the Family Islands;
- ❖ Within New Providence, a disproportionate share of crime takes place within the inner city areas, known as the traditional “Over-the-hill” communities;
- ❖ The incidence of violent crime tends to be of particular concern, given the sharp increases over the measured periods and its relative unresponsiveness to current strategies for crime management.

- ❖ Domestic violence and reports of child abuse are at disturbing levels. This point takes on even greater import when one considers the suspicion that the abuse of children and intimate partners goes under-reported – especially within the rural Family Islands.
- ❖ Property Crimes have been at high levels for many years. These crimes tend to contribute to a great sense of personal and community insecurity and heighten the perception that crime is out of control.

From this assessment, areas of **priority** intervention should cover the following:

- ***What should be the priority areas in a national crime reduction strategy?*** Reduction in the incidence of violent crimes - particularly homicide, robbery, abuse of intimate partners and children, violence between young persons. Secondary must be a focus on the reduction in theft, breaking and entering – given the damaging impact of these on personal and community welfare and perception of security
- ***Where, from a geographic standpoint, should be initially targeted?*** Initial focus on inner city areas of New Providence for homicide and robbery, and on entire Bahamas for violence against intimate partners and children.
- ***Who should be the priority grouping to be targeted, both as victims and perpetrators?*** For victims, women and children are naturally most affected by domestic and sexual abuse. Also, given where crime happens, it is those in the lower socio-economic brackets - who live in the inner city neighborhoods of New Providence - that are more likely to be victims of violent crimes. Within this group, young men tend to be the victims of violent assaults and homicides, when women are victimized by sexual and intimate partner abuse.
- ***How should the national strategy be shaped?*** Targeted interventions that flow from holistic, integrated policy initiatives that cut across public sector and civil society organizations. The strategies should have clear benchmarks and indicators and be subject to period reviews and adjustments as necessary. These periodic assessments must gauge the success of individual programs on the actual “impact” that the initiatives have on crime – meaning that only those initiatives that can demonstrate success in reducing crime and violence and attendant risk factors should be graded positively and continued as part of the overall national strategy.

3 Crime Prevention Programs and Policies

Section 2 provided an analysis of crime and violence in the Bahamas, indicating steadily increasing levels of reported criminal offenses over the last 40 years. It highlighted several key socio-economic factors such as unemployment, depressed urban

environments and fragile family structures that tend to encourage or correspond to higher rates of criminal and violent activity. It showed that women and children are particularly at risk as victims of domestic and sexual violence and that young men are disproportionately over-represented as perpetrators and victims of homicide and violent assaults.

This section will seek to establish a framework for successfully reversing the crime trends and victimization that have so negatively impact citizen safety in the Bahamas. It will highlight the core themes of international best practices, examining the essential features of ‘what works’ in crime prevention and mitigation around the world.

The section will also examine the strategies and studies undertaken on crime to date in The Bahamas, commenting on their potential and actual effectiveness and noting the extent to which they correspond to what has been demonstrated to impact upon crime in other jurisdictions. The aim of this will be to determine which elements of current local thinking and strategies to combat crime should be included in and strengthened as part of any ongoing national strategy to address crime and its attendant root causes.

3.1 International Best Practices: What works in preventing crime.

Researchers in several countries have, either independently or at the behest of a government authority, undertaken extensive work on determining the actual ‘impacts’ of a range of crime prevention policies and programs. These studies have sought to determine the efficacy of these programs from the perspective of whether or not they actually reduced the elements of crime and violence that they sought to address.

These studies differed from more customary evaluation techniques which tend to focus on “process” related measurements such as client reach and utilization and budgetary discipline. Their emphasis on “impact” related measurements sought to determine which programs made a measurable difference to the relevant prevailing situations and which did not. In other words, these assessments sought to determine “what works”!

What follows are elements of the strategies from what works around the world that can be incorporated into a Bahamian national strategy for addressing priority crime and violence issues:

3.1.1 Integrated and cooperative public and civic management

A consistent theme through many of the examples of successful crime initiatives are integrated planning and collaboration – this collaboration being at times between public agencies or between the public sector and private or civic concerns.

One such example is the improvements in the customer safety environment of the New York City Port Authority Bus Terminal, which before the initiative had been hampered by severe customer harassment and high incidences of petty and serious crimes. The initiative was undertaken jointly by the Port Authority, the New York City Police and other external social service entities and covered some seventy-six different intervention strategies. After three years, the program demonstrated considerable success with reports of harassment and petty crimes being more than halved and retail trade up significantly.¹⁵

Another example of successful collaborative efforts include the Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Program where the US Department of Health and the National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect were able to team up to provide sustained pre-natal and early infant home care visits by relevant professionals to ‘at-risk’ mothers. The children of the mothers involved in this program were abused less as young children and were less likely through adolescence to get into trouble with the law.¹⁶

A key element of these and many other such programs has been the preparedness of diverse agencies – including those from different sectors – to find the means to work cooperatively on common issues over a sustained period of time. In many cases, no single entity would have housed the expertise or reach to execute the range of strategies in these initiatives. However, given the nature of the issues, it was important that a single nexus of responsibility and focus be established.

3.1.2 Reduction of Opportunities and Increase of Risk for would-be perpetrators

The most successful strategies for combating crime in the short term is to address the situational factors that enable, encourage or facilitate crime. The UK report *Working Out What to Do: Evidence Based Crime Reduction* states it this way:

The four main opportunity-reducing mechanisms that have been identified in situational crime prevention include ‘increase in perceived effort’, ‘increase in perceived risk’, ‘reduction in anticipated reward’ and ‘removal of excuses’ in committing crime. Provocation-reduction might comprise a fifth.¹⁷

As one would imagine, would-be perpetrators look for easy targets in places or at times that would minimize their chances of getting caught. Moreover, elements which reduce inhibitions (alcohol consumption, large groupings of persons) also tend to facilitate certain anti-social behavior patterns.

The effective strategies to reduce opportunities look to augment and improve the physical security of individuals and property. Those that seek increase the risk elements of

¹⁵ See Gant and Grabosky, *The Promise of Crime Prevention, 2nd Edition*, pp. 18-19

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁷ Tilley and Laylock, 2002, Paper 11 of the UK’s Home Office Crime Reduction Research Series. See Executive summer p. iii for quote.

potential offenders examine and improve both passive and active monitoring and surveillance of areas – heightening the possibility would be seen, identified and apprehended much more readily.

The Safer Cities Program in the United Kingdom heavily emphasized ‘target hardening’ as a key feature of the program components that aimed to reduce domestic burglary. This meant a greater focus on improving the security features of homes and buildings, including lighting in public and private areas. Those cities under the program saw marked reductions in burglary and in the fear of burglary.¹⁸ In these cases, the opportunities to commit an offense had been reduced.

In many cities in the U.S. and elsewhere, a successful strategy in increasing the risk-element of would-be perpetrators has been an increase in Police patrols in hot-spot areas.¹⁹ This element increases the possibility of direct exposure of the would-be offender and increases the response time to offenses committed within the targeted area. Attempting the offense in this environment becomes more risky and the behavior patterns of potential offenders change accordingly.

What make these strategy elements and examples important is their potential to impact the crime situation in the short term. While many features of any broad based national strategy on crime will take several years to show significant impact, properly conceived efforts to address the situational factors detailed above can translate into almost immediate positive impact on the crime situation.

3.1.3 Sustained and targeted Intervention strategies

International literature suggest that strategies for addressing ‘at-risk’ individuals invariably are built upon well conceived, well-articulated, carefully managed programs, that are characterized by medium and long-term sustained and targeted interventions.

The targeted interventions take two forms: They tend to be focused on specific constituencies or specific ‘at-risk’ groupings, as opposed to more general population sets. Secondly, they seek to build up cognitive skills in individuals, helping ‘at-risk’ persons develop appropriate decision-making skills, while at the same time identifying and addressing potentially destructive behavior patterns.

Underlying these is usually a significant amount of planning and execution capacity, usually involving multiple stakeholders and multiple program elements. Also evident is substantial attention to the development of specific benchmarks and objectives and ongoing evaluation of articulated goals. These features are noted in particular in programs that address domestic abuse, and ‘at-risk’ mothers, infants and young persons.

¹⁸ Gant and Gabosky, pp 22-23

¹⁹ *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, Sherman, Gottfredson, *et al.* 1998, National Institute of Justice. pp. 8-13 – 8-15

In the city of Ypsilanti, Michigan, a program was undertaken geared at ‘breaking the cycle of disadvantage through preschool enrichment’, the aim of which was to improve the life prospects of disadvantaged children by focusing specifically on the earliest, most formative years of their educational experience. The program is described this way:

Children participating in the program were African American, from low socioeconomic backgrounds and of low intellectual performance. The program involved daily high quality classroom sessions for children, as well as weekly home visits by teachers for mothers and children. Home visits were designed to involve mothers in the educational process and to encourage greater educational development within the home. The curriculum was based on active learning and specifically sought to develop children’s cognitive and social skills.

Through the assessment years, children who participated in the Perry Preschool Program scored significantly better on school achievement and intellectual performance tests than non-program students. At age 7, the intervention group scored significantly higher on intelligence and language tests...and at age 19, significantly higher scores were recorded for overall literacy, health information and occupation knowledge.²⁰

Similar approaches have been employed with notable effect for issues that deal with development of parenting skills for single mothers and in treatment of chronic juvenile offenders, as well as other issues which respond better to individualized and sustained attention, involving development of cognitive skill sets and comprehensive program management and follow-through.²¹

The common thread through these types of programs is the focus on specific ‘at-risk’ clientele, coupled with active and intensive interventions that employ frequently one-on-one or one-on-few encounters. Moreover, the strategies use multi-faceted approaches that address all the players who are a part of – or contribute to – particular situations. In the case of the ‘at-risk’ preschooler program, there are elements which speak to the parents, the teachers and the students. These make for strategies which are holistic and geared to critical risk factors, which no-doubt help to explain their apparent effectiveness.

²⁰ Gant and Grabosky, pp 30&31

²¹ Ibid, see pp. 34&35 for a discussion of the Multi-systemic Therapy for Juvenile Offenders program and pp. 32&33 for the Positive Parenting Program undertaken in Queensland, Australia.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK IN CRIME PREVENTION?

The National Institute of Justice in the United States was commissioned by Congress to undertake an extensive study on the range of crime mitigation and prevention initiatives throughout the U.S. Using a variety of statistical measurements to determine the efficacy of thousands of programs in effect for many years, the report, published in 1998, developed a profile of the types of programs that work in preventing crime, those that do not work, and those that show promise.

Outlined below is the sometimes surprising list of types of programs that have proven to have no noticeable effect on crime in the short or long term:

In communities

- Gun buyback programs
- Community mobilization of residents' efforts against crime

In families

- Home visits by police to couples after domestic violence incidents

In schools

- Individual counseling and peer counseling to students
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.)
- Drug prevention classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals, including self-esteem
- School-based leisure time enrichment programs

In labor markets

- Summer job or subsidized work programs for at-risk youth
- Short-term, non-residential training programs for at-risk youth
- Diversion from court to job training as a condition of case dismissal

By police

- Neighborhood watch programs organized with police
- Arrests of juveniles for minor offenses
- Arrests of unemployed suspects for domestic assault
- Increased arrests or raids on drug market locations
- Storefront police officers
- Police newsletters with local crime information

By criminal justice agencies after arrest

- Correctional boot camps using traditional military basic training
- "Scared Straight" programs whereby minor juvenile offenders visit adult prisons
- Shock probation, shock parole, and split sentences adding jail time to probation or parole
- Home detention with electronic monitoring

3.1.4 Relevance of International Best-practices in the Bahamian context

Sub-section 3.1 has detailed the key features of successful anti-crime initiatives in different. For the Bahamas, these themes are helpful because they provide a basis for assessing our anti-crime efforts to date, and to lay the foundation for recommendations that are based on proven strategies.

In the articulation of strategies, the concept of opportunity reduction and risk escalation for would be offenders should feed into reducing the incidence of theft and burglary – as crimes facilitated by situational factors. This concept is also critical as a linchpin of the shorter-term, immediate impact type programs.

The notions of integrated management and collaboration along with sustained and targeted intervention strategies are important for dealing with ‘root cause’ issues. These are the medium and long term strategies - where efforts are geared at “re-socializing” individuals, in an effort reverse destructive behavior patterns and counteract negative environmental norms. These are important for addressing many the victimization issues prevalent in the Bahamas (domestic and sexual assault; child abuse, youth violence and delinquency, etc.) that result from violent and anti-social inter-personal situations or dysfunctional home and neighbourhood environments.

3.2 Key Bahamian Strategies to address crime and violence– The impact of public and civil society efforts to date.

Within the last decade there has been considerable attention given o the issue of crime, both from the public authorities and from civil society. This section outlines the more important studies and initiatives commissioned by the government, as well as the types of civil society responses to determine their actual impact to date, their convergence with the relevant themes of “what works” internationally and their potential moving forward.

3.2.1 Public sector led research and reports

Beginning in the mid-1990s, the public authorities in The Bahamas have devoted considerable resources to the study of the issue of crime and related factors, and to determining strategies for reversing ever increasing crime rates and substantial citizen insecurity. The primary studies (and their years of publication) are noted below:

- The National Youth Report (1995)
- The National Commission on Crime Report (1998)
- The CDR International Report on Police Reform (2001)

The three Youth, Crime and Prison Reform reports are each the products of government appointed commissions to respective subject area. These commissions generally took the approach of engaging broad public dialogue on the range of issues and specific consultation with experts within the field.

The Youth and Crime reports both pointed to key factors – illegal narcotics trade, poor home and community environments, high social tolerance for criminal enterprise, poor educational system, and unresponsive public bureaucracies – that lead to unacceptable levels of crime and youth underachievement.

Both reports highlighted significant issues and outlined very clearly and adroitly many important elements that have contributed to the prevailing social situations. Nonetheless, the research and subsequent reports could have benefited from greater emphasis on quantitative assessments and analysis upon which to draw their conclusions. This would have helped to pinpoint more accurately the types of offenses that require most immediate attention provided for better targeting of particular ‘at-risk’ groups (i.e. persons in particular geographical areas, of certain ages, specific to women or children.

The recommendations from these reports could have also been strengthened by reference to international best practices and to what has worked elsewhere. Clearly, many of the recommendations demonstrate some knowledge of programs with proven track records (parenting classes, enforcement of drinking laws, intervention programs for domestic violence issues), yet other recommendations (i.e. gun buy –back program) fall within the parameters of programs which have been shown not to work elsewhere.²² Further, in the case of Youth related recommendations, both reports could have made more explicit reference to the long-term cognitive skills development and social competency training that the research demonstrate to be critical elements of ‘at-risk’ youth programs.

Yet, the critical shortcoming of these efforts has been in the implementation of the findings of the commissions. Except for the Crime Commission’s call for Police Reform (discussed below), even the more promising recommendations

Key Elements of the Police Reform Exercise

Commissioner of Police Paul Farquharson notes that the recommendations have been implemented in earnest and that preliminary indications are positive. According to him, there has been “significant progress in creating greater public confidence in the Police Force, made possible by a crackdown on corruption within the Force and substantial efforts to improve community relations.”

He explains that the Police Force has – consistent with the recommendations of the CDR report – sought to introduce modern police management techniques. Elements of these include:

- Devolution of management of crime and day to day administration away from headquarters and to the individual districts
- Greater Focus on Police Intelligence and Intelligence Gathering
- Strategic Planning and Evaluation Sessions
- Enhanced local and international training for officers on forensics, modern police techniques, and business administration.
- Piloting of community outreach programs - these include
 - i. the introduction of consultative committees in the New Providence district made up of citizens of the area and
 - ii. intensive and sustained community building exercises, involving the integration and cooperation of social welfare, public health and infrastructure related government

²² See Appendix VI & VII for respective full listing of the recommendations of the National Commission on Crime Report and the National Youth Report

have not been developed much further. This suggests a difficulty in finding appropriate implementation and management mechanisms which ought to be addressed in any forward looking comprehensive strategies.

As noted above, the public authorities did follow up on the recommendation for reform of the Police Services. To begin the process, the government engaged CDR International, a UK based consultancy firm, to undertake a strategic review of the Royal Bahamas Police Force. The survey began in 1999 and resulted in one hundred and forty (140) recommendations to improve management of the Police Force.

The Police Force has implemented a number of the recommendations which center around devolution of authority and administration, focus on strategic management practices and improvement in day-to-day crime management techniques. The crime rates have moderated and even declined in some cases since the implementation of the police reform efforts. Further, the Police have expended considerable human and financial resources in improving their relationship with the various communities throughout the country. They contend that this has led to greater trust and more cooperation even in traditionally “difficult” neighborhoods.

Yet, while signs are promising, the reform efforts are still in the infancy stage and thus determining the long term efficacy is still some time away. Indeed, to permit the kinds of ‘hot-spot’ crime management and responsiveness, the management of the Police Force agrees that greater attention will have to be placed on both the overall and the internal allocation of human and capital resources, as well as on continually improving the management capacity and overall skill-sets of members of the Police Force.²³

3.2.2 Public Sector and Civil Society Initiatives to promote citizen safety

Over the last two decades, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in The Bahamas have responded with great energy and enthusiasm to the increasing rates in reported crime and violence and the threats to citizen security and well-being. This response has taken many forms, most predominately with attempts to focus on youth socialization – but also with considerable attention to gender-based and child violence, drug and alcohol abuse, community empowerment and even with efforts to better consolidate and allocate CSO resources. Within the public sector – particularly within the last decade – there has also been notable attempts to introduce innovative and cross-agency, cross-sectoral initiatives to deal with key social issues.

3.2.2.1 Youth Focused Initiatives

²³ Interviews with Commissioner of Police, Paul Farquharson, October 2003 and Superintendent Hulan Hanna, January 04

Within the broad Bahamian CSO community, the focus on crime prevention caters primarily around the notion of youth development. There are hundreds of registered organizations that have youth socialization as their primary or only mandate. These include extra-curricular organizations such as Boy's Scouts, Girl's Brigade or Governor Generals Youth Awards. Generally speaking, these types of organizations – with represent the overwhelming majority of youth initiatives undertake weekend and after-school programs that attempt to provide wholesome social activities for their clientele in environments characterized by safety and security and access to positive role models.

A small number of organizations and initiatives entities seek specifically to address 'high risk' young persons who have been identified – usually within their teen age years – as having substantial behavioral problems or delinquent tendencies. These include organizations such as YEAST or the government sponsored Program SURE that attempt to provide alternative education opportunities and greater focus on life-skills development.

3.2.2.2 Child Abuse and Neglect

The issue of child abuse has received particular attention through the Department of Public Health' establishment of a unit for Suspected Cases of Abuse and Neglect of children (SCAN) that has as its mandate the detection of and intervention on suspected and confirmed cases of child sexual and physical abuse.

Manned by nursing professionals from the Public Hospitals Authority, the unit runs a full time office to investigate and manage cases referred to it and also to serve as a secretariat for the SCAN team, an oversight and advisory committee that maintains a full cadre of related professionals (health care workers, private and public doctors, police, NGO representatives, social service agents, school health representatives, etc.). The oversight committee meets once per month to review cases and SCAN unit strategies

3.2.2.3 Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence

The issue of domestic abuse has received considerable attention through the efforts of organizations such as the Crisis Centre and several others women's groups. They have managed collectively to lobby successfully for long overdue changes in laws, to provide counseling and refuge for battered women, and to sensitize and educate the public to on more productive and less confrontational intimate relationship. The Crisis Centre works closely with a number of public agencies and is a point of referral for suspected domestic abuse cases.

In 2003, the public authorities moved to improve coordination of and responsiveness to the pressing issues of domestic violence. The Ministry of Social Services established the Domestic Violence Intervention Committee, comprising membership for the Police, Health and social service agencies and the non-profit sector to discuss and determine

strategies for reversing the rates of domestic violence and for dealing appropriately with the perpetrators of such. To date, the Committee has organized community meetings to sensitize residents to the fact, first, that domestic violence is a crime, and that there are agencies to which victims can turn to obtain support and counseling.

3.2.2.4 Alcohol and Drug Abuse

A number of organizations are attempting to address the issue of drug and alcohol abuse. Several, including the Bahamas Association of Social Health (BASH), operate full time half-way home facilities to allow recovering addicts the opportunity to rehabilitate and re-integrate themselves into society.

Organizations such as the National Drug Council and the Drug Action Services work to provide public education and sensitization on matters related to drug and alcohol abuse, and to lobby for better enforcement of existing drinking and drug laws.

3.2.2.5 CSO Coordination and Cooperative Efforts

CSOs such as Safe Bahamas, the Urban Renewal Commission and the nascent Bahamas Council of Voluntary Social Services are attempting to consolidate and coordinate the activities of the range of social oriented civil society organizations. These entities contend that the public sector and the civil society community must find ways to more efficiently plan and execute priority social programs in the face of limited human and financial resources.

These entities are attempting to raise the overall resource base available to civic minded civil society organizations, while ensuring that these entities operate in an accountable manner, with appropriate focus on strategic management and administrative efficiency.

3.2.2.6 Challenges to Optimal Effectiveness of Public Sector and CSO initiatives

Without question, the civil society community and the public sector within The Bahamas have responded with great effort to serious and significant citizen insecurity and social fall-out, occasioned by consistently increasing incidences of crime and violence. These initiatives have pioneered new thinking to old problems, and have brought the necessary attention and focus to many critical issues.

Yet, despite considerable resource allocation and community effort, the crime rates are still unacceptably high, especially the incidence of violent crimes. This would suggest a need to review what has been done to date and determine if current strategies and techniques allow for maximum impact.

One such way to do so is to compare local efforts to what has been demonstrated to work in crime prevention elsewhere – to see the extent to which Bahamian initiatives converge with the international best-practices outlined in Section 3.1. What follows are some of the elements of ‘what works’ in crime prevention that should be considered in efforts to improve local strategic thinking:

○ *Increased Cooperative and Integrated Program Management*

Those programs which demonstrate success usually involve multiple agencies and entities working together on sets of related issues. In the Bahamas, the tendency is for individual agencies and entities to attempt to undertake identical programs. When dealing with at risk young persons from particular areas, for instance, the program design may have to include the Education, social services, and Environmental Health agencies and perhaps even the local community empowerment organization.

This approach allows for interventions to address at the same time different components of the at-risk profiles of these young persons. From a practical standpoint, identifying involving the referenced community empowerment organization to take on after-school programs in that particular area could avoid wasteful duplication channeling at a high-level youth activity resources to a single entity for a single area.

Of necessity, this would involve a shift in the current approach to program development and management. There would need to be clear articulation of the specific risk-factors coupled with more emphasis on holistic strategies. This would require the identification of an entity or entities that could coordinate and oversee program management at a macro-level. The establishment of the SCAN unit, the Domestic Violence Intervention Committee, the Urban Renewal Commission and Safe Bahamas – all represent positive steps in this direction that policy makers may want to expand and strengthen moving forward.

○ *Greater emphasis on data collection and “impact” evaluation*

Currently, very little has been done to date to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of the referenced initiatives in ameliorating the specific social ills that they have set out to address. More often than not, anecdotal evidence is put forward to suggest that these programs meet with some success; nonetheless, to obtain sustained support from the policy makers and the public, framers of these initiatives should incorporate without exception, evaluation features within the program design that would permit determination of where they are successful and where adjustments should be made.

As noted in Section 3.1, the nature of the assessment must be based on the ‘impact’ of the initiative. The examples noted in that section shaped their evaluation regime in part to answer the question: Is this program or strategy having a measurable impact on the situation it is seeking to address? If local programs for victims of domestic violence, for instance, are to be termed successful, then participants in the programs should be able to claim notably less repeat offense over time than those from similar situations who are not part of the program.

As a prelude to better evaluation mechanisms, attention will have to be given to ensuring that 'data collection' and utilization facilities are improved. Section 2.3 spoke to information capture and assessment. This element must be addressed across all related to permit the kinds of impact evaluations that are necessary to allocate resources most optimally to those program areas that are showing greatest effect.

○ *Earlier identification of 'at-risk' factors and more sustained intervention*

Two of the key features of successful interventions geared at individuals are the ability (a) to identify and address the risk factors as early as possible and (b) to ensure that the interventions are sustained over an extended period of time.

Examples of these include the Michigan preschool enrichment program referenced earlier, where children from at risk environments were targeted from about aged three, through a program that lasted for duration of their entire preschool enrollment. Other examples have been cited that address children most at risk for abuse or neglect from the *pre-natal* stage through to their toddler years. These programs start early and are extended for a number of years.

By contrast, the at-risk youth programs in The Bahamas usually interface with individuals in their teen years and after they would have already exhibit significant deviant behavior. The bias evident in local examples still tends toward reactive therapy as opposed to preventative therapy. Even still, because of program design and resource limitations, the interventions seldom last more than a year.

Moving forward, greater emphasis will have to be placed on intervention strategies that identify and isolate key demographic or social risk factors and address them *before* they manifest themselves in actual problems. Further the program designs must consider that interventions must be regular and over an extended period. This again speaks to the need for integrated and involved management at a macro-level, to ensure coordination and continuity of multi-faceted, multi-sectoral programming strategies.

Yet for these, and the range of youth related programs to obtain maximum effectiveness, there are important elements to be addressed and improved. As Section 3.1 detailed at length, interventions geared at 'at-risk' individuals must incorporate certain principals to optimize chances for success. The strategies ought to:

- address cognitive skills development, so individuals learn how to make appropriate choices;
- be targeted at specific behavior patterns, indicating a fair amount of individualized case management;
- be multi-systemic – meaning they must address the range of factors that interplay to shape the individual;
- be undertaken over an extended period of time, usually over a number of years.

For youth-related programs in the Bahamas, this would require significant adjustment in strategic thinking. First, it will be important to ensure that individuals coming into a program have been assessed to determine the specific deficiencies that must be addressed. Some young persons have learning disabilities, some suffer from mental or emotional trauma, others have drug dependency issues and others still have behavioral issues.

The multi-systemic element means that in addition to the young person, their families, their schools and their peers should be factored into the therapy. To improve chances of success, the intervention should be started as early as possible in the development of the

4 Strategies for Addressing Priority Violence & Crime Problems

As detailed in Section 2, the most pressing concern is the reduction in the level of violent crimes and offenses. The rates of homicide, sexual assault and armed robberies are at alarming levels, especially in the inner city urban areas of New Providence – even with the moderation in the rate of growth over the last five years.

Given the very critical social and economic impact of these offenses, it is clear that priority must be given to reducing, in the short term, the occurrence of these offenses to more tolerable levels, while introducing or reinforcing medium term strategies for addressing the underlying factors that contribute to the rates of violence evident in the country.

The recommendations in this section are based upon the themes referenced in Section 3.0 preceding. They build upon the promising elements studies and strategies already employed within The Bahamas, detailing where such facilities can be better utilized to help create safer communities. They are based upon reference to “what works” in crime management and prevention as detailed in international studies that have analyzed many hundreds of programs in countries over the world and employed.

Also key to the recommendations is the premise that the courses of action must come out of a single national plan of action - approved at the policy level - that would:

- i. document the short, medium and extended goals,
- ii. be coordinated and evaluated through macro-level coordinating entities,
- iii. be provided with resources sufficient to undertake the coordinating and execution effort;
- iv. make documented reports to the policy makers at select intervals, noting progress and suggesting adjustments in strategies as necessary.

This point of focus is not intended to create another public agency with the responsibility to execute crime prevention and mitigation programs; indeed, there already exists both public and civic entities that can be empowered to undertake the oversight and coordinating roles critical to ensuring that the resources from all sectors are channeled and directed in an optimal matter.

In fact, as has been noted, the difficulty in many cases has not been a lack of noteworthy recommendations and proposals, but rather a deficiency in the capacity to coordinate, focus and evaluate these efforts in a consistent and strategic manner that would minimize wasteful duplication and help ensure maximum impact and effectiveness.

4.1 Priority Areas of Focus – Actors and Factors

This subsection looks at the key areas for priority focus and examines the main and primary actors and causes of these offenses. It examines also the processes that tend to facilitate and encourage the particular offense. Identifying these elements is important to ensure that the recommendations for mitigation actually address and are specific to the factors that lead to particular behavior patterns and occurrences.

4.1.1 Violent Offenses

The evidence indicates too that the majority of these violent crimes not only are done by young males, but that they take place overwhelmingly in the inner city environment of New Providence. The nature of violent crimes are such that perpetrators undertake them on the anticipation that the likelihood of immediate detection by the Police is minimal. Accordingly, one key process that leads to violent crime is the perception by the perpetrator in these areas that he or she will not be seen or recognized and that the Police is not nearby.

Recommendations to address the issue of violent crime, in the short term, must look at first ensuring that the Police patrols and other passive and active surveillance are increased to help reduce opportunities to commit these offenses. Over the medium and long term, attention must be placed on early identification of and intensive, extended interventions with ‘at-risk’ young persons, as well as on-going support and training for parents and educators in distressed environments.

4.1.2 Violence against women and children

The high rates of reported sexual abuse against women and minors in The Bahamas makes this a clear matter for priority attention. Indeed, this particular problem seems to be a problem in both the urban and rural areas of the country, with professional opinion suggesting high levels of under-reporting, especially in the small communities of the Family Islands.

The public visibility of many resource and support centres is low. Thus, many victims tend not to have ready access to the contact information for public or civic sector aid agencies, nor are they aware of the mechanisms and facilities to which they may avail themselves in situations of distress. In certain areas, these facilities also may not have sufficient resources to enable long term and sustained interventions, meaning that victims often return to the harmful environments, especially when their opportunities to sustain themselves are limited.

In the near term, policy intervention must include significant attention to public awareness campaigns to ensure first that victims and potential victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence realize the full range of immediate and long-term interventions available. Related entities in the civic and public sector must be empowered from a

coordinating and resource standpoint to ensure that individual cases receive the involved and sustained attention required over time.

Legislatively, policy makers may want to give consideration to changes in the law that would give a Police officer the discretion to press charges for reported offenses of domestic violence, with court-mandated counseling as a minimum sentencing requirement.

Over the long term, policy makers must ensure that through the formal education system and the mass media outlets, all Bahamian residents become and remain sensitive to the issue of domestic violence; these efforts be focused on reshaping the current tolerant attitude toward many of these offenses, identify perpetrators as criminal offenders and showing the full impact on victims.

4.1.3 Reducing the incidence of Theft, Breaking & Entering

To ensure that this downward trend continues, it will be critical to ensure that policy makers continue to encourage and support mechanisms that create harder targets and reduce opportunities for such offenses. As with violent offenses, would-be perpetrators must be deterred by the consistent presence of Police and passive surveillance. Tax incentives may be considered for individuals and businesses looking to upgrade their level of security.

In the medium to long-term, improving Police intelligence gathering mechanisms to infiltrate organized theft rings will be critical to reversing trends. More challenging will be the cultural acceptance of stealing and thievery. Here, efforts could be placed on restorative justice mechanisms, where even minor offenders will be required to confront the victims of crime and be made to work to pay back for items lost as a result of the actions of the perpetrator.

4.1.4 Drug & Alcohol Abuse & Mitigation

Policy efforts to counteract the impact of drug and alcohol use on crime must first ensure that existing laws in respect to alcohol consumption are judiciously enforced. Thus, the minimum age drinking requirements, the closure times and internal consumption restrictions on liquor stores, the prohibition on drinking and driving – all these must be enforced to control who consumes alcohol and then when and where they do it.

Over the medium term, focus should be placed on the support for intermediary facilities that provide sustained treatment and care for abusers. Attention must also be placed on identifying chronic users of drugs and alcohol, especially among youth, so as to channel these persons into intervention and/or rehabilitation programs.

4.2 A National Action Plan to Combat Crime and Violence

The recommendations detailed in this sub-section are outlined in a time-series format, looking at what would provide impact over the short term, the medium term and the long term. It is shaped this way to provide the means to deal readily with pressing priorities, while laying the foundation for sustained reversal of current trends in crime and violence.

The solutions template is based upon a holistic approach to crime mitigation that cuts across and impacts a wide range of public and civil society initiatives. This perspective necessitates the adoption of a national plan of action that would be overseen and assessed by a limited number of macro-level entities mandated to address certain elements of the plan. To avoid the creation of a new agencies or organizations, it is envisaged that existing entities be retooled and upgraded to facilitate the execution of the national plan.

The rationale for a single national plan would be to ensure that there is appropriate focus, coordination, planning and follow-through on the range of initiatives that would be undertaken and expanded. The plan would have clear budgetary provisions, reporting guidelines, evaluation mechanisms, and provisos for mid-stream adjustments where necessary.

What follows below are recommended key elements of the National Plan on Crime Management and mitigation.

4.2.1 Short term Strategies (0-12 month impact time)

The points raised in this section seek to highlight those strategies which should lead to a measurable reduction of particular crimes within one year.

4.2.1.1 Expand Police Hot-Spot Focus

The Police Force indicates that focusing on Hot-spots for crime is already a part of their current crime management strategy. The intelligence units use hard copy maps of New Providence to highlight via color coded pins, the trends in particular crimes within a given period.²⁴ Further, there is broad recognition within the Police Force that the inner city areas of New Providence are particularly troublesome areas.

The international literature on what works point to the benefit of increased Police Patrols and presence as a means to deter crime within hot-spot areas.²⁵ Given that the majority of serious violent offenses take place within three of the ‘over-the-hill’ districts of New

²⁴ Interviews with Inspector Solomon Smith and Corporal Barry Smith; January 2004

²⁵ See for Example the summary report of *What Works in Crime Prevention* produced by the National Institute of Justice, 1998. At Appendix X is a summary outline of the programs and initiatives which were found “to work”, “not to work”, and “to be promising”.

Providence, attention must be given to increasing vehicular Police Patrols in these high crime areas, especially during the peak crime period of Friday to Sunday.

To facilitate this and minimize new resource requirements, the Police may want to make use of the Police reservists who could be used to man Police stations while full-time Police officers undertake the increased patrols.

The major cost outlay in this strategy is the acquisition of more vehicles and related operating costs. In certain cases though, it may a matter of fully utilizing available assets that would otherwise been garaged or parked at a station during the peak periods.

To supplement this effort, there should be an expansion of foot and bike patrols during daytime hours in densely populated, high crime areas. This would both provide for more visible police presence and would allow for more intimate interaction between the Police and residents in the community – a key component in building community trust and mutual respect. The Police indicate that this initiative has already begun in some key area and has shown positive signs. The recommendation here therefore is that the program be expanded and that appropriate resources (i.e. bicycles) be assigned to the initiative.

4.2.1.2 Target Hardening Campaign with Public Subsidies for Security Related purchases by individuals and businesses

To combat both armed robbery and theft, greater attention must be placed on ‘target hardening’ strategies and campaigns to deter would-be thieves and robbers from their goals.

Here, the public authorities can play an important role by reducing the costs of individuals and businesses acquiring security devices and instruments. In the Bahamas, this could be accomplished by a reduction or elimination of Custom duties and other import fees on items such as home security screens and bars, steel doors, home and business surveillance equipment, motion sensor lights.

In poorer communities characterized generally by high levels of rental properties, the public authorities can provide incentives such as real property tax reductions for landlords who upgrade the security profile of their rented properties. Home owners in these areas – who do not pay real property tax because the values of their properties are below the ‘tax line’ – could be given vouchers written to participating companies to help offset the cost of the security upgrades.

In aggregate, the value of the imports of these type goods are only a minute component of overall imports. Thus, import tax reductions on these goods would not prove detrimental to the government overall fiscal position. More importantly though, given that import

duties total about 45 percent of the cost of most Bahamian imported goods,²⁶ an elimination of these duties would bring down prices considerably and allow more individuals and businesses to upgrade their security infrastructure.

Additionally, through an extended public awareness campaign, the public must be sensitized to the value of relatively simple ways to protect their property. Whether it is through tagging personal belongings or installing motion sensor lights around their homes, the aim of this campaign must be to advise residents as to how they can upgrade their security profile oftentimes in a cost effective manner.

Public agencies should be required to identify and remove abandoned vehicles and buildings, which, in residential areas have proven to be holding facilities for stolen goods or, in the case of empty dwellings, even been staging areas for break-ins. The same applies to undeveloped plots of land in residential areas, where burglars use these properties to survey potential targets and to store stolen property on a temporary basis.

A matter as simple as proper lighting can deter would-be burglars and robbers. Consequently, included in the targeting hardening campaign should be an audit of the lighting capacity and facilities in public places, roadways, footpaths and parks. Where deficiencies in the lighting systems are found, upgrades should be undertaken beginning with the inner city urban areas where both night-time foot traffic and robberies are comparatively higher.

4.2.1.3 Anti Domestic Violence Initiative

Given the alarming number homicides linked to domestic incidents in recent years in The Bahamas, certainly a key priority must be to reduce significantly the number of incidents that ultimately lead to serious injuries and fatalities.

A key difficulty in the current laws of The Bahamas in respect to domestic violence is that the victim must press charges before the offender can be charged with assault. The dynamics of intimate relationships means that this seldom happens.

Accordingly, a key means to address this must be changes in the law, allowing the Police the discretion to arrest the offender with or without the consent of the victim. The research on effective domestic violence intervention strategies show that arresting an employed offender goes far in discouraging future episodes. Indeed, for first time minor infractions, it may be necessary only to provide court mandated counseling – with escalating penalties on second and subsequent offenses.

The key strategy however is the nature and extent of follow-up once a case of domestic violence is reported, given the likelihood of repeat offenses which tend to escalate over

²⁶ Custom duties are the primary tax instrument in The Bahamas, accounting for more than half of all public revenues. Import taxes on most goods is set at 35 percent of the landed cost with an additional seven percent stamp tax.

time. Evidence from a number of countries show that sustained follow-up by public authorities diminishes substantially the chances of re-offense.²⁷ The evidence from the United States suggest that follow-up intervention by social workers tend to be more effective than that by Police, but that in any case, equal focus must be on both victim and perpetrator.

As part of the intervention strategy, the first-time victim should be provided with the necessary literature and a full catalogue of available public and civil society support systems. Police officials and related civil society entities both agree that in The Bahamas, potential victims often do not realize that this type of an assault does constitute a crime; they also are not aware that there are both public sector and civil society entities to which they can readily turn for assistance.

Then given the general low level of awareness and the cultural acceptance of domestic abuse, substantial and immediate attention must be given to a formal public awareness campaign that would encompass the following:

- a) Ensuring that everyone understands that domestic abuse is a crime and never an appropriate response to any perceived wrong
- b) Creating broad awareness of the full complement of available intervention and support services for victims of domestic violence
- c) Focusing on the potential perpetrators, with messages that (i) speak to the 'weakness' of domestic violence offenders and (ii) suggest ways to handle more appropriately conflicts in intimate relationships
- d) Enlisting the support of the general public in reporting suspected cases of abuse, with the understanding that the tips will be anonymous

This campaign though must be sustained with varying messages and approaches to ensure that the public remained engaged. The aim must be to permit potential victims and the public generally to understand that domestic violence is already contributing to high numbers of homicides and thus even suspected and actual *minor* cases of abuse must be addressed before they escalate to deadly levels.

For this initiative, the Domestic Violence Intervention Committee can be enlisted to coordinate and oversee implementation of the various program elements of this strategy. The committee would make use of the range of public and civic organizations that would be useful participants in such an exercise.

4.2.1.4 Introduction of Repeat Offender Unit

²⁷ As one such example, see summary on the impact of the Leeds Domestic Violence and Repeat Victimization program in reducing repeat offenses. Gant and Grabosky pp 52-53

Current Police Intelligence efforts pay special attention to high-risk ex-convicts leaving prisons due to what the Police describe as a propensity for these persons to become involved once again in serious criminal enterprise.²⁸

Studies in Washington D.C. and Phoenix with Repeat Offender Units point out that greater focus on monitoring and quickly apprehending re-offenders had a notable impact on reducing crime.²⁹ This is of particular note given the continued difficulties that the Bahamian Police Force have with repeat offenders.

While current Police Intelligence does provide for attention to ex-convicts at high risk for re-offending, it would be useful to establish a full unit to cover and track the movements of former inmates who would be at high-risk of re-offending. For The Bahamas, the Washington D.C. model may be particularly useful, where pre-arrest investigations are employed - designed to catch offenders in the act of crime so to enhance the strength of evidence in subsequent court trails. The aim of this unit must be to get re-offenders back into incarceration as quickly as possible.

4.2.2 Medium Term Strategies (24-36 month impact time)

The recommended strategies in this section look at initiatives that, due to implementation time, target audience or nature of intervention, will not impact crime statistics immediately, but - when implemented – should translate into significant reductions in crime within a period of three years. The focus of many of these medium term strategies are on ‘high-risk’ young persons and other means for keeping persons out of the penal system in the first place.

4.2.2.1 Early Identification of and Intervention with Critical ‘At-risk’ teenagers.

This component of the overall strategy is to search out and isolate for special attention those young individuals who have demonstrated tendencies that if left unchecked, will likely lead to criminal activities. Research has showed that kids who tend to be bullies, who come from abusive and neglectful homes, and who demonstrate severe academic and emotional deficiencies show significantly greater risk than their peers to end up within the penal system.

To counteract this, the school system, the social services agencies and the health-care facilities must work together to establish a network to develop case profiles and records for such young persons – most critically, from a time perspective at least, those teenagers who are at or near the age of independence.

²⁸ Interview with Insp. Cash and Corporal Smith of the Police Intelligence Unit.

²⁹ The National Institute of Justice Full Report, pp 8-24 – pp 8-25

In addition to identifying the most ‘high-risk’ young persons, the educational and extra-curricular environment should be adjusted and retooled to achieve the following:

- a) Keep the young persons involved and interested in school, through more individualized attention, greater focus on subjects of interest to the student,
- b) Train them in ‘social-competency’ skills, which would be geared to life-skills training, stress and anger management, problem solving and appropriate inter-personal relationship skills and conflict resolution
- c) Coaching in thinking skills to permit them to assess situations and come to more appropriate conclusions or choices
- d) Encourage them to join after-school and weekend programs to ensure extended interaction in a positive and controlled environment
- e) Assign them with Volunteer mentors, representing adult volunteers who would be prepared to spend time with them outside of the formal school environment
- f) Assign them with social workers who could provide family counseling and therapy and do follow-ups in the case of delinquency.

Key elements of this approach are evident is the curriculum of YEAST and other ‘at-risk’ youth intervention programs within the country. From a facility standpoint, current public school facilities could be used, creating what works now as ‘schools within schools’ with a separate curriculum and administrative structure.

4.2.2.2 Drug & Alcohol Abuse Treatment and Pro-active Enforcement of Alcohol Laws

Both the National Youth Report and Crime Commission referenced the social, criminal and economic impact of drug and alcohol abuse within the country. Further, professional opinion and anecdotal evidence suggest that substance abuse plays a significant role in reported violent and criminal activity.

As part of a national plan to combat crime, it will be critical to focus on means first, to discourage over-indulgence and underage drinking. Here, it will be necessary to enforce more consistently existing laws in respect to public intoxication, drinking and driving and legal age drinking laws. A part of this should include random breathe exams and intoxication tests by Police Patrols, especially during the troublesome weekend periods when violent crimes peak. At the same time, there must be a crackdown on businesses which sell alcohol to under aged customers or to those already showing signs of severe inebriation.

Second, the coordinating agency implementing the national plan must bring together all those civil society organizations who are attempting to address chronic abuse and addiction to ensure that resources are utilized optimally to provide full and sustained intervention and accommodation, where needed, for those convicted of minor offenses where substance abuse was a factor, as well as for those seeking voluntary help. These

organizations can also cooperatively seek to undertake a full range of public awareness activities to encourage more responsible use of alcohol and other mind altering drugs.

The ultimate aim of these activities must be to reduce over time the influence of mind-altering substances in the facilitation of violent activities.

4.2.2.3 Expansion of Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence

One sure and obvious way to reduce the level of domestic violence is to remove victims from chronic abusers. In fact, many victims remain in abusive situations because they feel they have few alternatives for immediate accommodation.

Currently, there are only a few shelter opportunities with very limited bed-space. Often, due to space constraints, only very young children can be accommodated, meaning victims with older children cannot stay within the shelters.

Accordingly, the national plan must dedicate resources to the expansion of such facilities and even the introduction of different models to meet victims with different needs. These different needs could be victims with older children, male victims, victims in same sex relationships and victims from the Family Islands, whose physical removal from their families and communities will necessitate greater support mechanisms.

4.2.2.4 Acceleration of Police Reform and Modernization (better trained, IT upgrades; better forensics; newer crime mgmt techniques)

The Royal Bahamas Police Force is among the more dynamic and responsive organizations within the public sector. The organization has embraced with determination the recommendations for improvements set out in the CDR report. To date, it has reorganized and reshaped its administrative structure and has taken great steps to ensure that corruption is eliminated at all levels.

To ensure the continuation and deepening of these reform efforts, attention must be placed on the following:

- a. Training of Officers in Investigative and crime management techniques** – The Police Force recognizes the need to accelerate opportunities for its officers to obtain higher levels of training in investigative techniques and crime management techniques at the macro level. Consideration must be given to special allowances as part of the salary package to officers who upgrade their skill sets. The allowances should be tied to the value of the skill set obtained to the organization and not the rank of the officer.
- b. Establishment of full, modern forensics facilities** – The Police desperately needs its own forensics facility as a critical part of its investigative part. Currently, critical forensic work must be sent overseas.

- c. **Greater integration of Information technology into day to day policing** - The Police Force has a full time Computer Unit which houses and compiles significant information on crime and crime trends. There is room, however, to develop the means to analyse and compartmentalize this information so that it could become a much more useful tool both for pro-active policing work and for follow-up.

The anticipation here is that by boosting the skill set of the Force generally and its ability to manage crime at both the macro and micro level, the opportunities to proactively address criminal enterprise and the ability to detect offenses after the fact will be heightened significantly. These will combine over the medium and long term to discourage would be offenders.

4.2.2.5 Improved tracking of Youth and Domestic Violence within and among the Education, Health and Police Services

Much of the youth violence is manifested in and around the high schools of New Providence, where often time the student body is made up of young persons from rival areas. Moreover, a lot of the serious wounding (knife wounds, severe beatings, etc.) that shows up in the emergency rooms of the hospital on the weekend again can be tracked back to violence stemming from young men from rival areas.

For the educational system, fights within schools are generally recorded as a school matter, meaning that unless the Police are called in and arrests made, there is no record of the event kept outside the school. Usually the Police are called in only if there is a weapon involved, an “outsider” is present, or where serious injury takes place. There is no requirement to report such incidents, either individually or in a consolidated form to the Ministry of Education.³⁰ Indeed, one senior police officer reported that, from the individual school’s perspective, there may be a *disincentive* to report, as there is a fear among school administrators that outbreaks of violence within the schools may be reflective of poor management by these administrators.

To help the Education, Police and other authorities to proactively address such matters, improvement must be given to how violence in schools are classified; what the protocols are for addressing same; and how the matters are to be reported and recorded. The issue here should not be to penalize school administrators for episodes in their schools; rather, it must be to provide a consistent and comprehensive database of events that may permit pro-active intervention where particular individuals keep showing up, and thorough investigation should a criminal offense take place.

A similar approach should be taken for the health care system. Currently through formal and informal channels, cases of suspected domestic and child abuse are referred to the Police, social services departments and relevant civil society organization. Here, attention should be placed on ensuring that the current mechanisms are consistent and comprehensive, and that relevant the organizations obtain information that is helpful.

³⁰ Interview: Ms. Dorothy Kemp, Vice Principal, C.I. Gibson Secondary School, November 2003

It is important though, that unless statutory law requires reporting of a particular offense, that any such reporting is made voluntary and anonymous on the part of the health care worker. International evidence suggests that such an approach tends to be more effective than mandatory reporting, the latter often causing great reluctance on the part of the care provider to probe injury cases sufficiently.

Underlying this initiative is the premise that better information within and greater information sharing among key public agencies will allow for earlier intervention and less violent episodes over time. If the same students show up in school fights in different schools within a specific time, the Police and Social services can do the appropriate school, home and neighborhood follow-ups to determine and help diffuse the underlying causes of the tension. The woman or child being twice treated for “minor” cuts and bruises within a matter of weeks can be identified and approached for intervention.

Generally speaking, the agency responsible for the implementation of the national plan will be required to look at how case information is gathered and used by the respective public and civic agencies to determine how and to what extent information can be shared among them, in addition to the types of cross-agency committees that must be structured or restructured to address cases collectively.

4.2.3 Long Term Strategies (36 month + impact time)

These recommendations seek apply methodologies which will likely take longer than three years to show any measurable impact on rates of crime and violence. Many of them look to deal with root causes of crime and violence, establishing sustained strategies to reshape public and cultural viewpoints and institutions, thereby creating safer and stronger communities over time.

4.2.3.1 After-school Programs & Week-end Programs for ‘At-Risk’ young persons

Many of the children who come from the high-crime areas of the country also are more likely to be exposed to severely dysfunctional home and neighborhood environments. Thus, even with positive interaction within the formal school environment, these children leave school each evening and go into environments where outlets for positive and constructive activities are limited.

To counteract this, the national plan must develop strategies to encourage and facilitate a full range of after-school and weekend activities for young persons, with priority on the disadvantaged areas of the country. There are many organizations and individuals who have demonstrated and expressed interest in these types of activities. Too often though, their efforts are undermined by limited resources and insufficient planning and coordination. It is here where a plan that details clear program eligibility, coordination parameters, organizational qualification, and budgetary provisions would be important.

It is critical to note that international studies of ‘What works in crime prevention’ points out that these programs work only when they are able to keep the interest of the participants. This point is important because there is a tendency at times for program developers to shape their initiatives based upon what the developer thinks is important for the young person and not on what the young person may actually be interested in.

What effective youth organizations and initiatives have found in The Bahamas is that activities involving sport and music (i.e. marching bands) are particularly effective in maintaining the interest of young persons – while still very importantly teaching them the important life lessons of civil interaction, discipline, teamwork, trust and positive mental and physical stimulation. The skills learnt in a marching band are of particular interest to Bahamian youngsters because of its lead-in to participation in the annual Junkanoo parades.³¹ Indeed, where two such youth marching bands were introduced in two of the more troublesome crime areas as part of the outreach program of the Police and the Urban Renewal Commission, Inspector Dean, the program coordinator, noted that demand to join the group far outstripped available instruments and resources.

With this understanding then, the youth programs outlined developed through the national plan must be tailored, on a priority basis, to reach the young persons who would benefit the most and be biased toward those initiatives that would maintain the interest of the target audience over an extended time period.

4.2.3.2 Parental Training & Support.

As an element of an extended strategy to combat crime, there must be consideration to providing additional parenting support and training, especially to young mothers who themselves live in distressed environments with little family and institutional support.

The report by the National Institute of Justice on *What works in Crime Prevention* indicates that regular home visits by nurses and social workers to single mothers of young children who fit the aforementioned profile has proven to be helpful in reducing cases of abuse and neglect of these children.

Attendance at pre-school and active teacher-parent involvement at this level have also been proven to reduce the arrest rates for children through to age 15. This would suggest as part of the national plan, an expansion of the publicly funded pre-school network or subsidy for qualifying mothers in the form of a voucher to enable their children to attend pre-school.

³¹ Junkanoo is the cornerstone and embodiment of Bahamian cultural expression. It encompasses two parades of vivid costumes and pulsating music in the holiday season, where rival groups (normally regionally based) compete to win the parade and individual components thereof. The foundations of the major groups are in the inner city areas and participation rates within these communities are very high. Young persons from these areas are eager to join youth marching bands in order to become skilled musicians. Competency in a brass instrument or drum almost assures an immediate pass to participate in the major groups.

Third, parent training and family therapy have shown promise in reducing the risk factors for delinquency, especially among pre-adolescents. Here, consideration may be given to linking certain welfare benefits (school uniform allowance, national insurance benefits, food stamps, etc.) to participation in these types of interventions as a means to encourage attendance by those individuals and families who would likely need it the most.

The component of the national plan that shape these parenting support mechanisms must be predicated upon the assumption that the children of single, young mothers from depressed environments are most 'at-risk' and that any intervention strategy or strategies must make them a priority.

4.2.3.3 Continued Promotion of Responsible Reproductive Health

One promising trend from Table 10 is that the rates of teenage pregnancy in The Bahamas have declined over the period of 1986-2000 both in relative and absolute terms. This points to some success in the efforts to instruct adolescents about responsible reproductive health.

Yet, the reality is that the 1997 Youth Health survey indicates that almost one-third of Bahamian adolescents between 13 and 15 reported actually having sex. In 2000, almost thirteen percent of all children born in the Bahamas were to teenagers and pre-teens. As one would expect, the vast majority of this births were unplanned and unwanted at the time.³²

Teenage pregnancies and births create social strains at a lot of points: The young mothers find it difficult to complete or continue their education once the children are born, thus curtailing her earning potential and ability to care for the child. The fathers of these children too seldom are a meaningful part of the children's lives. The mothers are often too immature to deal with the challenges of parenting or are they able to impart important social skills that they themselves are grappling to perfect. Too often, the end results are children who are poorer, have limited parental interaction, are abused or neglected, and have limited social training. The risk factors for these children becoming involved in delinquent and criminal behavior are extremely high.

Thus, as perhaps the most long-term of all the recommendations, the national plan must examine ways to reduce the levels of unwanted pregnancies. This not only stops the birth of unwanted children who tend to be at greater risk for delinquent behavior, it provides great opportunity for young women to meet more readily their full academic and professional potential.

The national plan must then seek to encourage the following:

- a. **Comprehensive education about sexual matters and intimate relationships starting at a young age** – The Ministry of Education currently has a

³² National Youth Survey, 1997.

- comprehensive sexual education training program. The recommendation here is that the training begin at an earlier age
- b. **Provide full access to free contraception devices for qualifying teenagers** – While persons can now obtain condoms free at a public clinic, this must be taken into the school system, where students should be able to easily and discreetly obtain them upon request.
 - c. **Provide extended counseling and support to “second time” teen and young mothers** – There are a number of young women in the Bahamas who have two or more children before they are twenty years old. Upon the second pregnancy of a single teen mother, the social services system must be engaged to provide more intensive and sustained reproductive health counseling. For the mother, public aid and benefits could be tied to participation in such a program.

The premise of these initiatives must be to address a key element of the core underlying dynamic of social fallout evident within the Bahamas: the strain on the social institution of parenthood. The key aim of this effort within the national plan must be to encourage residents to delay parenthood until they are able to deal sufficiently with the challenges and opportunities that accompany the introduction of children into a household.

4.2.3.4 Strengthen and Reshape Police Community Consultative Committees

As part of its reform effort geared to engender greater public trust, the Police Force established Consultative Committees, made up of residents from within each of the divisions of the Police, beginning in New Providence. These consultative committees have been operational for approximately three years with varying levels of effectiveness and reach.³³

International literature points out that while neighborhood efforts to fight crime (i.e. Neighborhood Crime Watch programs) in depressed communities do not tend to work, there is some promising evidence that police meetings with residents on regular basis to establish priorities at a minimum reduces the perception of crime – a critical element in the psychological and social well being of residents.³⁴

In the Bahamas, the Consultative committees have also helped in restoring the confidence of the community in the Police, which assists greatly in both pro-active and reactive Police investigating. Moreover, the consultative committees themselves have worked to raise resources to implement community programs (meet and greets, summer programs, after school recreation centres) and thus provided important community leadership and sense of cohesion.³⁵

Accordingly, the national plan should recognize the value in continuing the work of the Police consultative committees. However, in an effort to engender greater public support

³³ Interview with Superintendent Hulan Hanna, January 2004

³⁴ National Institute of Justice, Full Report, see sections three (3) and eight (8).

³⁵ Hanna Interview

and to establish the perception of a degree of independence, these committees should be provided with an independent budgetary allocation and with clear guidelines for the parameters of their activities.

From a strategic standpoint, these committees provide an important link between the Police and the communities, allowing residents to help set the priorities for pro-active community Policing, while providing a much needed venue for residents to express their concerns and suggestions concerning how Policing is conducted within their neighborhoods and communities.

4.2.3.5 “Focused” Rehabilitation Efforts

The evidence on the ability of the state successfully to rehabilitate an offender is mixed at best. Routinely around the world, recidivism tops 60 percent, making the reported rate of 66 percent in the Bahamas average at worst.³⁶ The bottom line is that for whatever reason or reasons, broad efforts at rehabilitation universally have not had the desired impact that policy makers and communities around the world would have hoped for.

Yet, there are elements of rehabilitation that do show promise: Those efforts which seek to use treatments that are specific and appropriate to the offender’s risk factors tend to be more successful than more general, more vague counseling type interventions.³⁷ Stated another way, one is likely to get more impact by focusing on behavioral factors like anger management and conflict resolution techniques than on, for instance, spiritual and religious counseling. For those with substance abuse problems, getting them to face up to and be a part of professional therapeutic session to address their addictions is what would more likely prohibit their re-incarceration.

This, from a strategic standpoint, means that the national strategy must detail rehabilitation initiatives that include the engagement of relevant professionals who can appropriately address the psychological, sociological and behavioral risk factors that lead offenders back into their actions. This is equally, if not more important than the educational and skills trade elements of any rehabilitation strategy.

4.3 Summary of Themes of National Plan

The scope of the national plan of action to combat crime and violence in The Bahamas is not exhausted, nor is it intended to be. The aim is to identify those pressing issues that most critically impact upon the lives and standard of living of all Bahamians.

Accordingly, there is little attention in the plan to offenses such as white collar crimes and to those crimes of vice (i.e. gambling, prostitution, etc.), which have not in The

³⁶ Safe Bahamas Initial Report, 2001

³⁷ NIJR, section nine (9)

Bahamas been associated with impacting significantly on the rate of violence. This is not to suggest that these matters are not of concern, it is just that from a priority standpoint, they tend to impact less on the overall safety and security of citizens within the country.

The aim has been to look at programs which have been demonstrated by clear and scientific evidence to have an “impact” on crime and violence – those initiatives for which a correlation has been established between their existence and a reduction in actual offenses. Thus, recommendations that tend to be popular such as gun buy back programs and peer leadership training for young persons are not included, because there is yet to date been any evidence that these types of program actually succeed in impacting on the overall levels of crime.

Finally, the strategies outlined within take a holistic arc to the critical citizen safety issues within The Bahamas. These were identified as violent offenses, violence against women and children, theft, breaking and entering and drug abuse and mitigation. These problems were determined to be particularly acute in New Providence, especially within the inner-city areas of the city of Nassau. Accordingly, the recommendations set forth are based upon these premises, and if implemented in a coordinated and focused manner, should accelerate the current downward trend in crime.

Importantly though, it will be critical from a policy standpoint to recognize and appreciate that there must be a single nexus of responsibility and coordination to ensure nimble and accountable implementation or expansion of projects. Again, this strategy does not presume the creation of a new bureaucratic entity, nor does it see the need to introduce large numbers of new projects.

Fortunately, The Bahamas has significant human and financial resources in the various social sectors, each of whom have a number of ongoing initiatives that would only need consolidation, direction and a reassignment of resources – as up until now, the key issue could best be described as a poor assignment of responsibilities and resources. Moving forward, the appropriate response for policy makers is to utilize and redirect its resources to the entities and initiatives best suited for a particular enterprise within the context and subject to the parameters of the overall national plan.

List of Appendices

Appendix I: Crime (Actual Numbers) 1963-2002

Appendix II: Crime (Rate per 100,000) 1963-2002

**Appendix III: Crime Rates: New Providence v. Grand Bahama v. Family Islands
1999-2001**

Appendix IV: Highlights from Youth Health Survey, 1997

Appendix V: Recommendations of CDR Report on Reform of the Police Services

Appendix VI: Recommendations of the National Crime Commission

Appendix VII: Recommendations of the National Youth Report

Appendix VIII: Profiles of Select Civic Oriented Civil Society Organizations

Appendix IX: Safe Bahamas Program Commitments 2001-2003

Appendix X: Contact List of NGOs with crime prevention/mitigation mandates

**Appendix XI: Summary Listing of *What Works in Crime Prevention*, National
Institute of Justice, 1998**

SEE EXCEL FILE FOR ANNEXES I THROUGH III

ANNEX IV

Results from National Youth Health Survey, 1997

<i>% of students in female-headed households</i>	38.8
<i>% of students who attempted suicide</i>	11.6
<i>% of students who had drunk alcohol "during past year"</i>	32.3
<i>% of students who had smoked marijuana "during past year"</i>	8.0
<i>% of students physically abused</i>	22.2
<i>% of students sexually abused</i>	12.9
<i>% of students with a handicap</i>	10.9
<i>% of students who carried a weapon to school "during past month"</i>	12.7
<i>% of students who carried a weapon at times other than to school "during past month"</i>	24.2
<i>% of students with gang experience</i>	13.6
<i>% of students aged 13-15 yrs who had sexual intercourse</i>	32.5

ANNEX V – Recommendations from the CDR Report on Police Reform, 2001

We (RBPF) recommend that:

- 1) The 1965 Police Act is repealed and replaced with legislation which is relevant to the 21st century and which is compatible with the Constitution of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.
- 2) The RBPF designs and adopts a Statement of Common Purpose and Values.
- 3) The RBPF designs and adopts a 5-Year Strategic Policing Plan to provide direction to its work and to act as a contract between the RBPF and the Community.
- 4) The RBPF designs and implements, as soon as is practicable, a major programme of managerial development for all its officers at Corporal level and above
- 5) A programme involving early retirement packages is devised for officers who lack the skills or motivation to play their part in the implementation of the agreed reforms.
- 6) The Police Act should contain provision for requiring the Commissioner to (a) formally bring to the attention of Government any matters of significance or sensitivity and (b) provide Government, on request, with verbal or written reports on any matter within his area of responsibility.
- 7) Under the Police Act, the Commissioner is required each year to provide Government with an Annual Report, setting out the RBPF's record of achievement against agreed objectives for the past year.
- 8) The Government appoints a panel of lay visitors who are empowered to visit places where people are detained by the police and to report their findings to the Commissioner and to Government.
- 9) Consideration is given to the formation of Police Consultative Committees within each local community in The Bahamas.
- 10) Government reviews and reinforces the role and terms of reference of the Police Service Commission and ensures that systems are in place to allow it to operate effectively.
- 11) All complaints against police are investigated by a single Complaints Branch and that a judge or magistrate is appointed by Government to oversee the administration of the complaints and discipline system.
- 12) All investigations of complaints against police, not involving court proceedings, should be completed within six months.
- 13) On every occasion that a firearm is drawn and/or discharged, a report is forwarded within 24 hours to the officer-in-charge of the Complaints Branch who will have immediate enquiries made for the information on the Deputy Commissioner. The latter will decide on what further action is necessary.
- 14) A properly organized and funded firearms training programme is initiated as a matter of urgency.
- 15) An Inspection and Review Branch is established under the direct command of the Deputy Commissioner, who is tasked to carry out annual inspections of each branch and division of the RBPF.
- 16) All senior officers in the RBPF – from Inspector upwards – undertake a learning programme to provide them with the financial understanding and skills to make a contribution to the Force's financial accountability, commensurate with their position in the organization, and to facilitate the devolution of budgets in due course.
- 17) The roles of the two Financial Controllers are reviewed and rationalized and that terms of reference, appropriate to the provision of this critical support service, are agreed and promulgated.
- 18) The Welfare Fund and the Canteen Fund are audited urgently by professional auditors and are then subjected to similar on-going annual audit.

- 19) The Deputy Commissioner, as Inspector of the Force, conducts a thematic inspection of all quasi-security posts and reviews these arrangements urgently.
- 20) The special services of police are supplied at fixed rates and that the monies gained are used to defray police costs.
- 21) The appointment of a dedicated RBPF Public Relations Officer.
- 22) We recommend that a trial scheme, using lawyers to prosecute on behalf of the police, is initiated and assessed after six months operation. Current police prosecutors should received additional training in criminal prosecution and court procedure and practice.
- 23) Interviews with suspects in cases of homicides and other serious crimes are formally tape-recorded.
- 24) Use of the RBPF Central Computer system for management information and performance indicators is greatly enhanced and that all supervisory staff are encouraged to make full use of this excellent system.
- 25) Adequate training is given to officers for each introduction of IT equipment to maximize and minimize abuse.
- 26) The RBPF develops a long-term Building Programme and agrees it with Government, so that the necessary financing can be put in place.
- 27) A programme should be devised and implemented as soon as possible to phase out the ranks of Senior Deputy Commissioner, Senior Assistant Commissioner, Chief Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Inspector.
- 28) Money saved by the reduction in supervisory ranks should be used for recruiting additional police and civilian support staff.
- 29) A formal programme is instituted to continue the process of devolved responsibility as part of the RBPF planning process.
- 30) The Deputy Commissioner is designated as Inspector of the Force, responsible for Complaints and Discipline, Research and Planning, and Inspection and Review.
- 31) The post of Assistant Commissioner (Family Islands) is phased out and territorial responsibility for the Family Islands is divided between AC (Northern Bahamas) and AC (New Providence and Southern Bahamas).
- 32) Inspectors should provide a level of supervisory cover, dependent on periods of foreseeable peak workload activity
- 33) Consideration should be given to up-grading the rank insignia of Inspectors and Assistant Superintendents and embracing all officers of Inspector rank and above in senior officer status.
- 34) Sergeants on the busier divisions should be available to lead and supervise each shift.
- 35) Research and Planning Branch should review divisional strengths and comparative workloads on a quarterly basis for consideration by the Policy Team, with an initial reallocation to staff from Western Division.
- 36) Flexible shift systems are introduced where necessary to math resource availability to workloads.
- 37) The Internal Security Division (ISD) is renamed the Operational Support Group (OSG), brought up to adequate strength and trained and equipped to deal with public disorder and crime fighting operations.
- 38) Once the Operational Support Group can provide a full response to spontaneous public disorder, the Mobile Unit is devolved to divisions.
- 39) Government approval is sought to amend the law that requires all accidents to be reported to the police on scene.
- 40) Five administrative police posts within the Traffic Department are civilianized.
- 41) The Motor Cycle Wing of the Traffic Unit is developed to Divisions and the Accident Investigation Unit transferred to the Mobile Unit.
- 42) Control Room and Communications Branch are merged.

- 43) The Air Wing and the Harbour Patrol become part of the Operational Support Group.
- 44) The Police Reserves continue to be encouraged and supported to play their useful part in the RBPF.
- 45) All officers in charge of divisions units regularly evaluate crime figures to ensure the proper utilization of resources. And, further, that they are responsible for the introduction of performance indicators to monitor arrest rates, conviction rates and workload.
- 46) 31 CID officers are devolved to Divisions and that 25 current CID posts are civilianized.
- 47) One Detective Inspector and one Detective Sergeant are posted to each of the divisions with the exception of Western Division and Carmichael Division where we recommend one Detective Sergeant and one Detective Corporal.
- 48) The Band and the Fire Service are removed from the Police establishment.
- 49) The 275 identified posts are the subject of early civilianization. Further consideration should be given to greater civilianization in the development of the manpower planning process.
- 50) The strength of the RBPF is brought up to establishment, coupled with a planned programme of civilianization.
- 51) The RBPF makes a public commitment to focus its attention on and provide real support for the front-line officers who provide the service to the community.
- 52) Individual officers are encouraged and supported in taking the primary responsibility for their own personal development and performance, whilst serving in the RBPF. And, further, that all officers – both police and civilian – are given the opportunity to understand and to learn **how to be successful** at taking responsibility for their own personal development and performance.
- 53) First-line supervisors and line managers are encouraged and supported as the primary HR Managers in respect of the police and civilian officers under their command. And, further, that a major RBPF-wide development programme is designed and put into effect to begin to provide supervisors and managers at all levels with the management and leadership skills necessary to take on their full HR Management responsibilities for those for whom they are responsible.
- 54) A new, single, central HR Department is created, replacing the two existing Personnel Branches and taking the role set out in Paragraph 3.2.3 above.
- 55) Plans are agreed between the Deputy Prime Minister and Commissioner for the selected person to be appointed as soon as is convenient as the Director of Human Resources for the RBPF, taking responsibility for the creation and management of the new HR Department, working directly to the Commissioner and becoming a full member of the Commissioner's Policy Team.
- 56) An appropriate Performance Management system is designed and documented; that a comprehensive RBPF-wide training programme is designed and conducted; and that the new system is introduced in a gradual and controlled fashion.
- 57) A Job Description and a Person Specification is created for every post [or group of posts] and becomes the basis of selection of that post.
- 58) The RBPF designs, adopts and promulgates an Equality of Opportunity Policy, to underpin its aspirations that all of its members will behave with fairness.
- 59) A proactive Manpower Plan is created and managed, in conjunction with the 5-year Strategic Policing Plan, by the Director of Human Resources.
- 60) A long-term programme is devised to create a body of Police Civilians, who are – and are accepted as – a full and integral part of the RBPF.
- 61) A pro-active but controlled Civilianization Programme is created, as part of the Manpower Plan for the RBPF.

- 62) The whole recruitment process is tightened up, based upon an agreed profile for the ideal recruit to the RBPF in the new millennium, with the opportunity to sign the first 5-year contract being moved to the end of two years' development, to tie in with the end of the probation period.
- 63) The RBPF adopts a new philosophy in Personal Development, based upon the principle of continuous learning.
- 64) The RBPF Police College is transformed into the Bahamas Police Academy.
- 65) In order to ensure that the services of the Academy continue to reflect the current and future needs of the RBPF, the Principal of the Academy should report in line management to the Director of Human Resources.
- 66) All vacant posts are advertised and filled only by those people deemed to meet the published criteria.
- 67) All promotion opportunities are advertised and that only those offers deemed to meet the published criteria for the rank or the post are identified as suitable.
- 68) A proactive Succession Plan is created and managed, on the Commissioner's behalf by the Director of Human Resources.
- 69) Taking account of statutory provisions, 5-year contracts of employment are introduced for all ranks in the RBPF up to and including Assistant Commissioner. As part of this process, the nature and content of the contract must be reviewed and brought in line with best employment practice.
- 70) A programme is designed and put in place urgently to lower the service and age profile in the senior ranks in the RBPF.
- 71) A new Annual Leave Policy is designed and put in place and that equitable arrangements are negotiated to deal with the current backlog of outstanding leave.
- 72) A professional Occupational Health specialist is recruited, working to the Director of Human Resources, to work up new policies on sickness, welfare and health and safety and to bring into effect a set of arrangements in these areas which provide practical and timely support to all of the officers, both police and civilian, who may need them.
- 73) The RBPF commits itself to an approach of encouragement and rewards for work well done by thanking people, by using the facilities already at its disposal and by creating new and imaginative award schemes.
- 74) A Grievance Procedure is introduced but not until a number of other recommendations for fundamental changes in human resource management have taken root.
- 75) In due course, a Staff Handbook is created for all members of the RBPF to build a better understanding of what is expected of them.
- 76) The Police Staff Association and the Public Service Union play their full part in the business of the RBPF, both for the good of the RBPF and for the welfare of their members. We further recommend that, in due course, the Commissioner meets regularly with the Staff Associations.
- 77) The Director of Human Resources manages a wide-ranging review of the human resource records in the RBPF, with a view to ensuring that they underpin effectively all that the RBPF seeks to achieve in managing its people.
- 78) AC (Crime) sets up and heads a Crime Committee, comprising senior detectives and divisional commanders, to formulate and implement strategy and tactics relating to the management of all crime matters.
- 79) We recommend that detective officers are posted to all divisions to work in a Divisional Detective Unit, under the line management and day-to-day control of divisional commanders.
- 80) The specialist detective squads and sections are brought together to form a Central Detective Unit, whose role is the investigation of serious and series crimes.
- 81) At least one officer on each of the Family Islands is trained as a Scenes of Crimes Officer.
- 82) A Serious Crime Squad, as part of the Central Detective Unit, is established on Grand Bahama.

- 83) AC (Crime) is directly responsible for setting the yearly planning process for the Central Detective Unit and has overall responsibility for the supervision and performance monitoring of the squads and branches within the Unit.
- 84) A structured, open and fair policy of recruitment, training and development is put in place for all detective officers.
- 85) Continuing modular training and development opportunities are provided for all detective officers, whether relevant to an existing posting, to a new posting or to promotion.
- 86) The RBPF adopts a policy of proactive, intelligence-led policing.
- 87) An Integrated Intelligence System is designed and introduced throughout the Bahamas, based upon Local Intelligence Offices and a Central Intelligence Unit.
- 88) Officers are selected and trained as intelligence officers to serve at both Local and Central levels and that proper consideration is given to the length of their postings.
- 89) The suitability of all officers currently employed on intelligence work is assessed formally against the Job Descriptions and Person Specifications and that appropriate action is taken to develop or replace them.
- 90) Once the RBPF's Integrated Intelligence System is installed and working effectively in support of operational objectives, discussions begin with other appropriate agencies to devise a National Intelligence System.
- 91) First-line supervisors and then those in line-management roles are held accountable for the quality of investigations and the relevant case files. Further, we recommend that effective use is made of the AS400 Central Computer System to assist in investigations, to register relevant information about the progress of cases and to accurately record data to enhance the Management Information System.
- 92) As part of establishing Local Detective Units, a Crime Desk is created on each division to assist with the administration of investigations.
- 93) Each division has a dedicated custody officer, available 24 hours a day, to deal with all prisoners detained there.
- 94) The new Central Detective Unit has dedicated custody officers available 24 hours a day to deal with the custody and care of suspects detained by the various squads and sections.
- 95) All persons who are fingerprinted should also be photographed and that the Criminal Record Office maintains indexed albums.
- 96) Where necessary, divisions are supplied with two-storey portable cabins to house the whole of the Local Detective Unit and to provide for suitable interview room (s).
- 97) A number of Detective Inspectors are identified as potential Senior Investigating Officers [SIOs] and undergo Advanced CID training and Murder Investigation training.
- 98) Sufficient officers be trained in major incident room procedures to facilitate future murder and other major investigations.
- 99) A suite of rooms is identified and designed to accommodate a number of major incident enquiries simultaneously.
- 100) Consideration be given to acquiring a suitable computerized system, specifically designed for assisting with murder and other major investigations.
- 101) The Senior Investigating Officer in all murders and other major investigations should maintain a policy file to be subscribed regularly by relevant senior officers, including the AC (Crime).
- 102) The Crime Squad is redesignated as the Serious Crime Branch and that its work should be proactive and intelligence-led. Its terms of reference should include investigating all serious and series crimes and it should be staffed by trained and experienced detectives. A Serious Crime Squad for Grand Bahama should be established at the same time.
- 103) The shift system for the Serious Crime Branch is adjusted to allow officers to be deployed at times of peak activity.

- 104) Consultation begins urgently between the RBPF and the Bahamas Medical Association to clarify the RBPF needs in relation to the physical examination of victims of sexual offences. These consultations should go on to agree a mutual training programme and a programme of appropriate action.
- 105) Suitable accommodation, properly equipped, is identified both in New Providence and in Grand Bahama to be used specifically and exclusively for the purpose of the care and examination of victims of serious sexual offences.
- 106) The Flying Squad is disbanded and that its role and posts are absorbed appropriately into the Serious Crime Branch and other related areas of the Central and Local Detective Units.
- 107) A multi-agency working group is set up to examine possible ways of reducing crime associated with the importation and registration of motor vehicles.
- 108) The Stolen Motor Vehicle Section is disbanded, with local vehicle being dealt with by local detectives and organized vehicle crime by the Serious Crime Branch.
- 109) The Firearms Investigation Unit is disbanded and its work absorbed into the Serious Crime Branch.
- 110) In a short term attempt to stem the rise in violent crime, a proactive joint operation is launched, involving the Central Intelligence Unit, the Crime Squad, the Drugs Enforcement Unit, the Firearms Investigation Unit and divisions, to gather intelligence and to target the criminal use of firearms.
- 111) Electronic security measures are introduced at Nassau Airport and Seaport to assist in the detection of firearms smuggled from elsewhere and between the Family Islands.
- 112) The present firearms legislation is reviewed to consider whether it is adequate to deal with the present day criminal use of firearms and that further consideration is given to changing the law dealing with the licensing of legal weapons.
- 113) Minor fraud offences are developed to divisions, leaving the specialist Commercial Crime Unit to focus on the more serious and serial cases.
- 114) As part of the introduction of an Integrated Intelligence System, proper protocols are established between the DEU and other investigative units within the RBPF.
- 115) DEU officers are recruited by way of advertisement from officers who have at least 3 years experience of detective work.
- 116) Professional accountancy skills are made available to assist the DEU officers in major investigations and that, in drug trafficking cases, financial investigations take place prior to trial.
- 117) At least part of the assets seized by police under the drugs legislation is returned to the RBPF to assist in the suppression of drug-related crime.
- 118) The DEU receives the support necessary to continue and expand its current drug prevention work in the community.
- 119) Cases of simple possession of small amounts of drugs should be dealt with at a local level.
- 120) Government considers the use of a cautioning procedure for minor drugs and other offences, especially in relation to juvenile offenders.
- 121) Officers and dogs specifically trained for drug detection are used predominantly for this purpose.
- 122) The security of stores for dangerous drugs is improved,
- 123) The modus operandi of the Strike Force is reviewed to ensure effective coverage of agreed commitments.
- 124) The current training programme is encouraged and that all new officers receive their basic training before taking up post.
- 125) The Government provides the impetus and the resources to build an independent National Forensic Science Laboratory within 5 years.

- 126) Whilst a Bahamian student is trained, an expert Forensic Pathologist is engaged on a short-term contract to fill the breach left by the imminent departure of the present incumbent.
- 127) The Scenes of Crime Section should come under the line management of the Forensic Science Laboratory, until the Laboratory becomes independent of the RBPF.
- 128) SOCOs posted to divisions are tasked and supervised by local managers and supported professionally by their colleagues at the center.
- 129) All requests for technical support and witness protection should be considered by AC (Crime).
- 130) With the introduction of a formal Integrated Intelligence System, AC (Crime) should be designated and act as the Registrar of Informants.
- 131) The SIB is renamed Special Branch and is placed in the line management of AC (Crime), with an annual inspection by an independent and well qualified team.
- 132) New terms of reference are designed and promulgated to set out clearly the Special Branch's role in Government and Public Sector vetting.
- 133) Corruption and complaints investigations are removed from the Special Branch's remit, in line with the establishment of a Complaints and Discipline Branch.
- 134) The intelligence gathering activities of the Special Branch be dealt with by way of a separate desk within the Central Intelligence Unit.
- 135) The Latent Fingerprint Section is brought under the line management of the Forensic Science Laboratory.
- 136) The Firearms Section is civilianized.
- 137) The Character Reference Section is civilianized.
- 138) The Records Section is civilianized.
- 139) The practice of taking fingerprints for the benefit of commercial concerns should cease forthwith.
- 140) A Project Manager and a Project Office are established to provide a focus for the implementation work, that sponsors are identified for each recommendation and that as is deemed appropriate, small implementation Teams are established to help with the work.

Annex VI - CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

National Commission on Crime (1998)

- 6.0.1 Commissioners have, throughout this report, made recommendations for addressing the many sides of the problems associated with crime in The Bahamas. What follows is, in part, a re-presentation of those suggestions along with an invitation that the government and the community consider not only proposals which would address the present concerns but would lay out a path for the future. The problems being experienced today did not suddenly come upon us and they were not thrust upon us from outside The Bahamas. We are, today, reaping the rewards of own inabilities, inattentiveness, incompetence and indiscipline – the seeds of which were sown many years ago.
- 6.0.2 The prison study indicates that two thirds of the inmates were employed at the time of his arrest, although the type of work suggests that lack of job security **may** have been a factor. One of the written submissions which we received (58) refers to the high proportion of charity and church workers who “raid” the funds to which they have access. Commissioners are left with the impression that most crimes, of all types, are the product of “greed, not need”.
- 6.0.3 Commissioners are, nevertheless, supremely confident that, despite the wide spread of those attitudes which create the climate for crime, we as a people have reason to be proud of our achievements over the last half century and our successes amply demonstrate our genius to harness a national will to reverse those negative trends which, if allowed to persist, would eventually destroy what we have tried to erect for ourselves and generations to come.
- 6.0.4 There are two recommendations of a general nature which we make before specifying particular items. Firstly, although insufficiently of remuneration was a common complaint among the public officers we saw (teachers, social workers, police officers, and so on), we accept that no society can ever afford to pay these persons for their dedication and service. Without, therefore, minimizing the need to keep salaries under review, we urge the Government, at the highest level of co-ordination, to develop the programme which several Departments have begun to publicly commending civil servants for excellent work. This serves to show that their efforts, often under adverse conditions, are valued by the society as a whole, but also shows to the community that not all civil servants are slack, incompetent and corrupt.
- 6.0.5 Secondly, we just referred to the “charity rackets” which plague the community and we have earlier mentioned the proliferation of beggars, some of them purporting to be soliciting for charitable purposes. We strongly recommend that Government create, by statute, a Charities Registry which will have to certify the bona fides of any person who solicits funds from the public and which would mandate proper auditing requirements. Further, we suggest for all charities, an umbrella organization, such as the “United Way”, as a means for better channeling funds which the public is willing to contribute.
- 6.0.6 We would wish it to be noted that, the Commission being an advisory body only, the recommendations that appear in the body of the report reflect a consensus of the Commission as a whole and, where they appear to be at a variance with suggestions contained in the reports of the working committees which would be found in Appendix 2, Volume 1 B, those supplementary recommendations remain available to the Government for its consideration.
- 6.0.7 Commissioners readily accept the criticism that the questionnaire which we commissioned (the analysis of which appears at Appendix 1 may not have been sufficiently “scientifically” designed in accordance with modern standards for conducting polls. Our goal, however, was merely to do a pilot study and to provide a means for public expression and so present government with a snapshot view of public opinions such as our limitations of time and resources permitted. Indeed, we recognize the limited utility to the Government even of a survey conducted strictly according to scientific statistical norms because governments in representative democracies are not merely delegates to a majoritarianism determined by polls. A responsible government often has to take positions of which the majority of the citizenry disapprove. Governments have a duty to heed the call of, what President Abraham Lincoln – in his first inaugural address – described as “the better angels of our nature”, even when the bulk of the electorate might chose to ignore it. The usefulness of ascertaining the views of the public is that it may show the way for officialdom to act or it may highlight to officialdom where it has failed to properly educate the public.
- 6.0.8 Commissioners have observed, in their several encounters with the public, that there is a measure of opinion which urges the adoption of measures to combat crime which would be violative of the fundamental rights guarantees of our own Constitution and of international norms, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It appears to us that, apart from such views reflecting the level of fear of crime in the community, they indicate a failure to appreciate how the modern Bahamas is recipient and inheritor of rights which were only secured after years of struggle against state oppression elsewhere and how we take for granted rights which many of the world’s citizens still struggle to secure.

This failure must be blamed on the insufficiency of programmes in the schools which teach basic civics as well as on the inadequacy of the response of private groups (lawyers, being the obvious example) to the need for public education.

- 6.0.9 We, therefore, offer the findings of the survey for the Government's information as material which points to the general frame of mind of the society.
- 6.0.10 We point out that, at the commencement of our task, we considered it to be crucial that we obtain a profile of convicted persons and, to this end, Committee 4 caused to be conducted among a representative group of inmates a pilot study, the results of which – as analyzed by Mr. Michael Stevenson of the College of The Bahamas – are annexed to the report of that committee at Appendix 2.
- 6.0.11 We consider that the honour of having been selected to serve on this Commission has provided us with a unique opportunity for education as to the level of commitment and competence which is in daily operation (with some notable exceptions) in service to our Bahamas, in the schools, in the churches and in the disciplined forces and regulatory agencies and in non-governmental organizations. We are of the view that the level of public confidence in the ability of "the powers that be" to meet their reasonable requirements would be greatly enhanced if these agencies would devote time to informing the public of their work, the successes as well as the failures. While the private print and electronic media cannot be coerced into presenting "puff pieces" which look suspiciously like official "spin doctoring", we would have thought that the Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas and Bahamas Information Services would have as part of their mandate the production of documentary material for the information of the public and this should include the work of these agencies where secrecy need only be maintained to protect personal or public safety or to preserve individual privacy. Apart from these official outlets, we believe that a more open relationship with the media, most of whom are responsible, will redound to the benefit of these agencies and increased public confidence in their ability to fulfill their functions and the commitment to duty of their members.

A. The Present

- 6.1.1 Commissioners accept that such statistics as we have been provided with and the wealth of other material presented for our consideration support the view, common to the police and their harshest critics who are knowledgeable on the subject, that, while the level of crime in the Capital is unacceptable, the residents of The Bahamas should be assured that the pervasive fear that he/she is at imminent risk of being the subject of violent criminal assault is unwarranted. (59). We, of course, accept that the fear of crime is a reality and recognize that, for the victim, statistics are meaningless; he/she has confronted the criminal in the flesh, not as statistical abstraction, and is 100 per cent affected by that encounter. We also caution that an assessment of the problem based simply on the presentation of statistics can be misleading (60). We repeat our earlier observation that persons have to assume a greater degree of responsibility for their own safety because an unsettling phenomenon is the apparent capricious nature of many crimes that do not occur. In this regard, we think that schools, the service clubs and the Ministry of Tourism might be persuaded to mount a "Be Safe" campaign aimed at residents and visitors.
- 6.1.2 **The principal recommendations which we offer to the government for short-term measures are directed towards reducing the fear of crime among residents of New Providence and assuring all residents of The Bahamas of the commitment of the authorities to the consistent, even-handed and effective commitment to the rule of law. In most instances, we consider the present laws to be adequate. We agree with the views continually repeated before us in private meetings and public sessions and elsewhere in the community that the major problem is the uneven and inadequate enforcement of existing laws.**
- 6.1.3 **Recommendation 1** Because illegal firearms are a crucial ingredient in armed robberies and other crimes of violence, we endorse the recommendation by the Police for a covert exercise, conducted with the relevant United States agencies, to reduce the number of firearms on the streets. (61) We understand that a vital tool in this area of police work is being put to the position to offer financial incentives for information from the streets. We, respectfully, urge that the relevant authorities give priority to ensuring the sufficiency of this fund.
- 6.1.4 Recommendation 2 In business areas and areas of dense population (where the Bahamian "small businessman" is present in large numbers) we recommend that there be increased foot patrols by uniformed officers, some of whom should be appropriately and conspicuously armed. These foot patrols should be supported by vehicular patrols and plainclothes officers. Secondly, we suggest that in the City of Nassau and in all areas frequented by tourists there be maintained a conspicuous (unarmed) uniformed police presence supported by vehicular patrols and plainclothes officers. We emphasize the importance of assuring the public that these patrols are a part of "community policing" and police officers who exhibit an inability to deal civilly with the public should be screened out of this duty (indeed removed from the Force). Commissioners expect this approach (which we understand now to be, more or less, in effect) would increase the "comfort level" of residents and visitors and act as a deterrent to criminal activity (62). In

suggesting these partially armed patrols, Commissioners are not unaware of the need to discourage the indiscriminate use and display of firearms by police officers in the overall strategy of public safety. (63)

- 6.1.5 In this context, we recommend, based on complaints we have received from police officers, that, while the present colonial uniform might be retained for police officers who perform ceremonial duties, early consideration be given to the design of a uniform – especially for policemen who are required to do foot patrols – which is more suited to our climate and which is easier to maintain (without repeating the errors made elsewhere when police officers then became indistinguishable from the ubiquitous “security guards”).
- 6.1.6 Recommendation 3 Commissioners could not agree on whether to recommend to the government that the laws proscribing gambling should be repealed. The police were of the view that gambling should remain illegal. Despite the frustrations recounted by the police as to their attempts to enforce the gambling laws – given the large number of residents, including police officers, who buy “numbers” – Commissioners consider it to be a national scandal that these laws, while they remain, are so notoriously flouted. Until such time as Parliament has determined to amend the law, Commissioners believe that the widespread non-enforcement of the gaming laws contributes significantly to the culture of disobedience to law.
- 6.1.7 Other examples which suggest a culture of lawlessness are road traffic laws, environmental regulations and laws restricting street vendors. As we noted at paragraph 2.3.11, these are not merely minor matters as it is believed that roadside garages are a factor in the high number of car thefts, most of which are taken for their parts. Crops lost by farmers are usually disposed of at roadside stalls.
- 6.1.8 Commissioners suggest that the police develop a 12 month plan, implemented area by area, to report traffic violators and, enlisting the aid of residents to rid New Providence of “numbers” houses, premises properly determined to be “drug houses”, roadside garages, street vendors (except for farmers and householders selling surplus produce at their own gates, as is traditional in most places), beggars and street hustlers.
- 6.1.9 We emphasize the need for community involvement in this exercise because, to be effective even after an area has been visited, the residents must appreciate that it is their responsibility to keep the area “clean”, in every sense of the term. While, for example, the police have a legitimate need to discourage “idle assembly”, loitering and vagrancy, not every young person or group of young people who congregate do so for an unlawful purpose. Commissioners emphasize the need for the police to avoid the aggressive and indiscriminate “sweeps” which in the past have angered residents and strongly contributed to the level of hostility that has developed between the police and young men. In much of New Providence there are insufficient places of recreation and to “hang out” on a neighbourhood wall rather than to be confined to a hot and overcrowded house should not expose a youngster to being manhandled by the police. Active community participation in the exercise which we propose would assist in the identification of those persons, young and old, who may be a source of trouble or present a reason for concern. Effective and assertive policing must remain sensitive to the rights of the residents whose legitimate concerns they are appointed to serve.
- 6.1.10 **Subject to these requirements and to the Constitution, the general law, courtesy and common sense,** Commissioners recommend that one of the objects of the exercise advocated above should be the disruption of the criminal activities of youth gangs which police have reason to believe to be the breeding ground for many of the problems complained of (64). This however, can only be an interim measure while a national programme for youths at risk is created, as was advocated in the Youth Report. Since Police intelligence (9) purports to be able to identify the leaders of these groups, we urge that the object of the measures which we propose should not be the destruction of the groups themselves, because their very existence bespeaks a response to a need for organization for certain purposes and any attempt to simply break them up would drive the members underground and disperse the anti-social activities into less controlled expressions. We expect that, purged of their criminal activities as a result of police surveillance and targeted prosecutions, those groups could become allies in the national efforts in community building.
- 6.1.11 Commissioners are of the view that the “quality of life” which the successful implementation of such measures would produce will also begin to reverse those cultural trends which inhibit effective law enforcement.

B. The Near Future

- 6.2.1 Recommendation 1 Commissioners have already emphasized the importance of confronting the problem of crime because of its impact on the realities in which the modern Bahamian economy is anchored – tourism and banking. The challenge of reducing the crime must, therefore, in our view, involve a continuing commitment by all sectors of the Bahamian society. We, therefore, recommend that the work begun by this Commission be continued by a permanent advisory committee on crime, comprising representatives from the banking community, tourism, the College of The Bahamas, the Chamber of Commerce, the “Over-the-Hill” business community, the Director of Public Prosecutions; the Police Force, the Registrar of the Supreme Court, the Crisis Centre, the Chairman of the National Youth Advisory

- Council and the Christian Council. We expect that the Research Unit of the College would be a necessary resource agency for this body.
- 6.2.2 The work of this committee should be co-ordinated from the Cabinet Office by a “supreme” (to employ a useful British term) appointed on contract from outside the civil service who has the confidence of the political directorate, the business community and the civil service and who, therefore, has the ability to “walk” between agencies and offices as “troubleshooter”. The crime supreme would be secretary to the advisory committee and would be required to make periodic reports to the parliamentary committee suggested below.
- 6.2.3 Recommendation 2 Commissioners are distressed that some politicians, from all sides, have succumbed to the temptation to treat the issue of crime as a target for partisan posturing. While we recognize that, in a democracy, any government must be open to criticism over its perceived failure in the area of crime, as with all areas which form the fabric of national life which governments are elected to secure and enhance, we are concerned that in the welter of political rhetoric it tends to be lost that the facet of governmental responsibility for the social phenomenon of crime is but one of many.
- 6.2.4 Commissioners, therefore, respectfully suggest that, in order to maintain the proper national focus on crime, the ultimate oversight authority be a bipartisan committee which the government would propose that parliament appoint.
- 6.2.5 Recommendation 3 Commissioners are left with a feeling of disquiet about certain aspects of the Police Force, the agency which is the fulcrum in the response to crime. As previously stated, our observations are directed at the institution, not individuals. Indeed, we hasten to point out that we have no reason whatever to make any adverse commend on any member of the Force Command or the subordinate ranks. There is, however, dissatisfaction within the Force on matters such as promotions and conditions of service. Outside the force there is apprehension both of inadequate structures of accountability on the part of the force and improper influence by the political directorate. Again, we state that we have no reason to suggest that this perception of political interference has a basis in fact.
- 6.2.6 We suggested that there be created, by statute, a civilian “buffer” between the Force Command and the political directorate, authorized to advise both the Force and the Government on policy and concerns of a **general nature** from within or outside the Force. Such a body would be institutionally connected to the Police Service Commission and be the clearing house for complaints by all ranks (save the Force Command) of the Force and the general public. As an alternative to the creation of such a body, we put forward the proposal for a “Inspectorate General” which has been suggested to us (65). We would, however, propose a lay inspectorate, modeled after the Office of the Auditor General. Whichever method is chosen, we suggest that the office also have responsibilities (with the necessary adaptations) for the Prison Service, and the Departments of Customs and Immigration. As we have previously stated – at paragraph 5.1.45 – **routine allegations of wrongdoing** by individual officers should be investigated by the special division we have proposed for the Office of the Attorney General.
- 6.2.7 Commissioners have also formed the impression that, despite the necessity for the police to rely on their assistance, relations with the Volunteer Police Reserve, are not as harmonious as they should, ideally, be. We invite Government to have the relevant Minister, along with his administrators and the Force Command (including the Commandant of the Reserves) an a representative group of Reservists, both from New Providence and Freeport, schedule an early meeting out of which proposals might emerge for the Government to revise the policies necessary for the smooth flow of this, in our opinion, necessary adjunct to the Police Force and a key component in the goal of community oriented policing.
- 6.2.8 Recommendation 4 Commissioners recommend that, as soon as resources so permit, attorneys from the Office of the Attorney General assume responsibility for the prosecution of all matters before the Stipendiary and Circuit Magistrates. This would, we expect, lead to the more efficient and expeditious prosecution of matters but should, by the concentration of prosecutions among a few persons in the same office as is responsible for prosecution in the Supreme Court, minimize most of the scheduling conflicts which, Commissioners believe, must be at the heart of the contradictory complaints of cases having to be dismissed because of the failure of police officers to appear and of police investigators having to spend unreasonable periods of time waiting around the courts to be called to testify. Police prosecutors could retain control over those minor matters such as are assigned to the lay magistrates (66).
- 6.2.9 Recommendation 5 Commissioners have been advised that, the assignment of a magistrate on circuit in certain Family Islands to perform the judicial tasks previously undertaken by “Out Island Commissioners” (now “Administrators” under the regime of local government) has proven inadequate to the needs of Abaco, Andros, Binimi and Eleuthera (67). The cumulative case load has resulted in lengthy adjournments between visits, to the expense and inconvenience of residents. For example, in North Eleuthera, it is necessary to hire a ferry to get to the magistrate’s court. A consequence of this is that many cases are not proceeded with the obvious negative effect on the maintenance of law and order.

- 6.2.10 We, therefore, urge the appointment of at least two additional Stipendiary and Circuit magistrates to effectively meet the needs of the entire Bahamas.
- 6.2.11 Recommendation 6 Apart from the obvious problems of the resurgent drug trade, it appears to Commissioners that insufficient attention has been given to treatment programmes for the users of illegal drugs. We repeat our recommendations at paragraph 4.2.1, the details of which appear in the report of Committee 2 and we urge their implementation.
- 6.2.12 Recommendation 7 Commissioners invite government to consider the advisability of creating a mandatory and dedicated bus system to accommodate students who do not walk to school or use private transportation. Such a scheme, if implemented, would reduce the opportunity for contact between students and persons who would coerce or entice them into criminal and other anti-social behaviour and also decrease the need for students to crowd bus stops and terminals, and so become a nuisance to businesses and otherwise contribute to traffic congestion. Parents who now transport their children might be persuaded to rely on that system thus decreasing the present negative impact on efficiency in the workplace and traffic congestion now caused by parents forced to do the 3:00 p.m. “school run”.
- 6.2.13 Recommendation 8 Commissioners urge that the thorny issues of some form of National Youth Service be addressed notwithstanding the reservations evident in the Youth Report. Several models have been proposed; the reports of sub-committees II and IV make proposals and we include, I Appendix 4, a paper presented to the Commission by Commodore Davy Rolle.
- 6.2.14 However Government decides to proceed, it is clear to Commissioners that, while it would be impossible – legally, socially and politically – for any such scheme to be compulsory for all young Bahamians, the service would comprise three groups of persons: young persons considered “at risk” and who are referred by the educational or criminal justice system; volunteers; and persons who seek government assistance for education or to start up small businesses, for whom a period of community service should be made a condition of assistance. In this last mentioned group, we would include all students of the College of The Bahamas, the cost of whose education is partially subsidized by the State.
- 6.2.15 Recommendation 9 Commissioners have articulated the role which volunteers need to play in addressing the range of matters which have an impact on crime. We believe that much work which is now done and which could be done is unfocused and there is much duplication. We do not advocate any excessive involvement in the affairs of organizations and persons and all such programmes, now run by churches, service clubs and others, should be encouraged to continue their efforts according to their chosen philosophies. We do feel, however, that there needs to be created a resource bank through which any interested person or organization can ascertain what needs are now being met by the Government or private persons as well as the areas in which further efforts are indicated.
- 6.2.16 Social workers in the Northern Bahamas have pointed out to us that retired persons are a pool of talent which is insufficiently activated in service to the community; however, if they were to be used in family life training and support services, some form of orientation and training is necessary. Commissioners, therefore, recommend that the Ministries responsible for Social Services and Community Affairs identify an officer from within their ranks who would co-ordinate volunteer educational and outreach programmes and, also, devise an appropriate training program for those volunteers who would minister in those areas where suitable training is vital.
- 6.2.17 Recommendation 10 Commissioners are satisfied that the incidence of “domestic violence” throughout The Bahamas is of such a level as to be a cause for grave concern among all residents and that innovative measures are required to cure this plague which replicates its consequences among succeeding generations. We do not support some of the measures that have been advanced, such as expanded powers of arrest or exclusion orders. Since arrest is simply a means of bringing a person before the court, whereupon the usual criminal procedures are begun, we apprehend that, unless such persons were to be automatically added to the extensive list of persons in custody awaiting trial, such a course serves no purpose and provides the party complaining with a false sense of security. Also, Commissioners are of the view that a practice whereby a party may be excluded from his / her home without a finding by a court and merely on the complaint of a family member would create a whole new set of social problems. Commissioners are satisfied that the present criminal procedures suffice for cases of violence or serious threats of violence. What we support, however, is the creation of intervention teams trained to assist in all aspects of domestic and family crises, the sanction of the criminal law being the ultimate tool in the kit available to such a team. This team approach would be the preventive and investigative gate to the domestic court system of which we have spoken.
- 6.2.18 We expect that the government would consult its expert advisors on how such a crisis team would be structured but we recommend that a key member be a police officer assigned on each shift to each police station or district who is trained in the area of domestic intervention and who would have immediate and continual access to suitable professionals, whether at the Crisis Centre or elsewhere, as resource persons.

- 6.2.19 Recommendation 11 Commissioners invite a consideration of what in modern usage is referred to as “victims’ rights”. We urge the need for systems to make the atmosphere of the courts more “witness friendly”. We have earlier pointed out the structural adjustments needed to reflect this. The system of justice would only function effectively if residents are confident that they will be treated in a professional and dignified manner by those who operate the system and included in this is the assurance that those who are adversely affected by crime are not further “victimized” by the system itself. We invite Government to consider some of the proposals advanced in chapter 10 of *Making America Safer – What Citizens and Their State and Local Officials ca do to Combat Crime*, edited by Edwin Meese, former Attorney General of the United States and Robert E. Moffit, published in 1997 by The Heritage Foundation: that “victim-witness case coordinators” be appointed to serve as a link between victims and the criminal justice system until a case is completed; that adequate restitution and compensation is paid to victims of crime by those convicted; that rules be adopted to protect victim-witnesses from courtroom intimidation and harassment; that, where appropriate, victims be notified about the release status of the offender.
- 6.2.20 We endorse, and commend to the Government for its consideration, the suggestion put forth, that it is unfair for our present system to require a complainant, notwithstanding the conviction of an offender, to have to commence suit through the civil courts to secure compensation or restitution. Courts at all levels should be empowered to award compensation and direct restitution in all criminal matters, including road traffic cases.
- 6.2.21 This head we also invite Government to appoint a panel of experts from within its own ranks to suggest changes which may successfully be made in order to deal with offences against children. The experience of other countries has documented the intractable nature of this problem so that, while we have the benefit of not having to repeat their mistakes (often with more horrific consequences than those produced by the deficiencies which were sought to be corrected), we would fail the innocents if we made no effort to identify and effect such alternations as are possible (004).
- 6.2.22 We do, however, counsel that the term “victims’ rights” is, in a sense, misleading in that it ignores the essential nature of crime as being behaviour so violative of the standards of conduct required of all citizens that the entire weight of state authority is given over to its investigation, prosecution and punishment – facilities not available to the citizen in ordinary personal disputes. Hence, common belief to the contrary notwithstanding, the State has a right to compel a reluctant person who claims to be a victim of crime to give evidence against an accused. Further, what is popularly perceived to be a disproportionate concern with the rights of accused persons, is rooted in the fact that the object of the criminal process is to deprive the person accused of his liberty or even his life. While investigators do not adjudicate and must assume the validity of complaints received by them, the incidence of the burden and standard of proof in the criminal courts is such that here are no “victims” until the court has made a finding of guilt thus, inferentially, finding that a crime has been committed.
- 6.2.23 Commissioners caution, therefore, that the public should not be lead to believe that there can be truly identical treatment as between those accused of crimes and witnesses against them, including complaints.
- 6.2.24 Recommendation 12 Commissioners invite government to consider the establishment of a fund for victims of crime who suffer injuries. Thus fund, which will not be available to victims of property crimes, would be partially funded by the convicted persons, including those serving a sentence of imprisonment (see report of Committee 4).
- 6.2.24 In respect of property offences, including traffic accidents, Commissioners repeat the recommendation that the law be amended to confer on all courts greater authority to award compensation, the exercise of which discretion providing an incentive to accused persons not to prolong trials and risk heavier sentences.
- 6.2.26 Recommendation 13 Commissioners suggest that the volume of traffic violations might be reduced through a more efficient management of complaints against offenders. We are advised that the system of “fixed penalty notices” is not operating as anticipated and we propose that the Chief Magistrate, along with a representative of the Commissioner of Police, prepare proposals for the Attorney General on what regulatory adjustments might be required.
- 6.2.27 We also invite the Police to investigate and advise the government whether provisions for incapacitating vehicles, by the “clamp” or “boot” might be effective against the type of offences encountered on the streets of the Capital.
- 6.2.28 Recommendation 14 In addition to our recommendation that the construction of a new prison become a matter of the highest budgetary priority, Commissioners suggest that the law and regulations relating to sentencing be reviewed to remove the near automatic one-third remission of sentences and release on licence and to establish, instead, a system of parole. Persons so released on parole would be subject to conditions, for example, electronic monitoring, reporting or residence requirements during the period of parole. Except for repeat offenders, we do not, however, favour the simple removal of remission as, without this incentive to “good behaviour” while in Prison, the reformation component of imprisonment would, in our view, be compromised.

- 6.2.29 Recommendation 15 Commissioners are also concerned about the fact that too many young persons, including those who come into conflict with the law as young adults, convicted before the courts of relatively minor offences, find their lives adversely affected by their past actions. This situation has a severe impact in two main areas – their inability to obtain a livelihood, and their inability to travel beyond The Bahamas.
- 6.2.30 Commissioners feel that government should review existing provisions regarding expungement, particularly the question of expunging of records for minor offences committed by young adults. Where such persons have obviously and consistently amended their lives to societal norms, they should receive every possible assistance which will allow them to live with dignity, making positive contributions to our society.
- 6.2.31 In addition to the above, it has been pointed out to Commissioners that organizations such as Prison Fellowship encounter serious difficulties in dealing with former prisoners who have demonstratively reformed themselves, and who can now be described as totally rehabilitated persons. Such persons have much to offer the existing prison population in the quest to guide them away from recidivism and to a new life from crime and the resulting prison penalties. Existing rules which prohibit visitation to the prison facilities by such persons should be reviewed.
- 6.2.32 Recommendation 16 We have earlier set out the reasons why, in our view, the ultimate solution to the “Haitian problem” will only be addressed by measures directed towards a mutuality of respect between Haitians and Bahamians and the integration of Haitians into the mainstream of Bahamian society. In the meantime there is, nevertheless, the need to address the criminal behaviour that takes a peculiar form in those Haitian communities mentioned and which, inevitably, affect the wider Bahamian society. While our recommendation 2, at paragraph 6.1.4, would eliminate some of that criminality, we consider it necessary that a plan be developed to reverse the problems caused by the mere presence of those unregulated communities. Why must a Bahamian be expected to obey the law when Haitians are able to run shops and build houses in contravention of existing health, building and licensing regulations?
- 6.2.33 Commissioners, accordingly, advise that the Government put together a group of officials – police, immigration, health, public works and social services – to, within, say 24 months dismantle these Haitian enclaves, some of which, we are given to understand, have become virtual fortresses. Persons who have no regular immigration status here should be repatriated and those who are here legally should be made to operate within the framework of our criminal and regulatory laws. While we are not mindful of the social and political difficulties which may flow from the need to resettle some of these persons, we see no alternative as the present situation is inconsistent with the principle of a society ordered by law and rules. We further strongly recommend that a condition be attached to the grant of any approvals for work permits for farm labourers, that the applicant satisfy the Immigration Board that suitable arrangements have been made for the accommodation of these guest workers.
- 6.2.34 Recommendation 17 Commissioners recognize that certain of the recommendations which it makes will increase the demands on our narrow tax base. While it is not within our remit to suggest revenue measures, insofar as we do urge increased expenditure of public funds, we suggest that the government employ “user fees” for a range of services which Bahamians now consider to be free from the government. While the areas amenable to such fees may produce a valuable education to those citizens who do not instinctively appreciate that there is a cost associated with every service provided by the state for which someone has to pay, directly or indirectly. Another suggested source of funds may be the provision of “vanity” or special interest licence plates for which some residents may be willing to pay a premium over the regular licence fee.

C. National Goals

- 6.3.1 Throughout this report we have emphasized the present crisis (whether perceived or actual is irrelevant) did not suddenly envelope us but is the fruit of certain negative attitudes which have been permitted to gradually infect our national psyche. The only effective solution is an adherence to those values which our own experience and that of the human race over the ages have shown to be indispensable to social well-being.
- 6.3.2 As residents and citizens of this young Nation, we must be willing to take full responsibility for the orderly development of the society. The trend has been to expect the Government, the Church and even outside parties to do whatever is necessary for the growth and development of the Country, while ordinary people go along making a living in the best way they could – legally or otherwise. The fact is that whatever it takes to continue, or re-develop, the march towards a just and ordered society, nothing meaningful will occur until Bahamians accept that responsibility.
- 6.3.3 We must maintain our constant pursuit of the vision of a people living together in one united society, knit together by the strong bonds of mutual respect and integrity where the dignity of the individual, and the Rule of Law are the norms.

Bahamians, from every strata of national life must always recall that the absence of justice, in its most basic sense, is a fundamental reason for the existence and proliferation of crime and violence. Equality of opportunity must be recognizable to every Bahamian in order to surmount the obstacles to meaningful personal and collective development. All persons, regardless of religious persuasion, accept that where there is justice, tranquility and peace abound.

6.3.4 As a society we – as government and as individuals, as officials and as business owners, as parents and as spouses, as clergymen and as teachers, as employees and as students – must ensure that:

- our children are properly fed, nurtured and trained in the values of our society;
- we protect children from abuse whether at the hands of family members or strangers;
- we forswear violence as a means of solving problems;
- we respect the rights of others to their property;
- we are compassionate to those in need or other forms of distress.

Annex VII – Recommendation of the Consultative Committee on National Youth Development Report

FAMILY

1. The Committee recommends that strong emphasis be placed on the family and family related issues, including the adoption of family friendly policies and strengthening of Government agencies responsible for family issues.
2. The Committee also recommends the establishment of a National Advisory Committee on family and family issues as a step in addressing the importance of the family as the primary social unit. Such a Committee should be comprised of representatives from the Government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector directly involved in the delivery of services of families. Government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should collaborate to provide a systematic and sustained programme of support to families.
3. We further recommend the establishment and development of community centers which would provide family counseling, parenting classes and family-oriented activities which would be critical in the development and nurture of families.
4. The Commitment recommends that Bahamian males seriously reexamine their role in society and accept their responsibility to make positive contributions to society. The Committee also recommends that the churches accept the role as facilitators in this process.
5. The Committee recommends that the Churches prepare relevant Family-Life literature to be made available to community and youth organizations for dissemination to the community-at-large. It is further recommended that the private sector, and to a lesser extent Government, provide financial resources for the preparation and publication of literature.

CRIME AND VIOLENCE

A. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

1. Government should establish an inter-ministerial committee comprising the Ministry of Youth and Culture, Ministry of Social Development and National Insurance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Training and the Ministry of Public Safety and Transport. These Ministries should integrate all major strategic planning, policies, programmes development and funding geared toward preventative initiatives.
2. Government should appoint a national crime prevention advisory board comprising government, private sector and volunteer organizations mandated to access the root causes of crime, police effectiveness, court procedures, sentencing, treatment of offenders, victims' compensation, legislative review and community involvement.
3. Government should encourage a national mobilization of community leaders and government agencies to focus on the improvement of community-order, the building of networks, and taking control of their own development by using any available and accessible resources in order to solve the problems leading to crime and violence.
4. Schools, churches, businesses and other community organizations should organize monitorial activities to provide role models for young people who have none or have negative role models. The attention and interest bestowed on young persons by adults whose care can enhance youth self-esteem and strengthen their ability to cope should be encouraged.
5. Government and social partners should identify unattached youth and design and implement activities to meet their specific needs in their natural environment.
6. Government in conjunction with social partners should utilize the media to combat crime by illustrating that crime does not pay and highlight frequently programmes on child abuse, mental health, drugs and alcohol abuse and the use of community resources.

7. Government and the private sector should set up a special job placement and training programme for young people which include a basic job readiness training programme to ensure that these young people receive help in joining the work force.

B. EDUCATIONAL

1. Government and social partners should educate and mobilize citizens to examine carefully how resources are being allocated to combat crime and violence.
2. Schools should include in the curriculum classes in conflict resolution designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop empathy with others, ways to control impulses, develop problem-solving skills and manage anger.
3. Government and the churches should design and implement workshops for parents and child interaction and improve parenting skills. Parental education programmes should also improve the ability of future parents to raise healthy children.
4. Strengthen pre-school education by providing appropriate regulations and training for operators and staff.
5. School administrators should establish clear guidance that specifically prohibit gang activity and encourage responsible citizenship.
6. Schools should ensure that there are vibrant extra-curricular programmes that give bored students an opportunity to participate in positive activities rather than gang related activities.

C. TREATMENT

1. In consultation with training institutions, professional associations and government agencies, the current shortage of trained staff in early education, youth work and correctional institutional care should be addressed.
2. Correctional institutions must establish a network of organizations, programme relationships and resources with outside organizations to both support and re-enforce the work of institutions as well as maintain linkages within the community.
3. Each church is encouraged to assist at least one youth ex-offender in becoming a contributing citizen by using the resources of their own congregations or by collaborating with other churches, civic or private groups.
4. The business community is encouraged to provide a slot for a young offender upon the recommendation of Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services.
5. The Government, in conjunction with volunteer organizations is urged to establish several semi-institutional arrangements that would cater to non-violent offenders and ex-offenders, e.g., half-way houses and educational or vocational training centers.
6. The Government should initiate, develop and implement programmes for the treatment of high-risk and uncontrollable youth in which they would be exposed to a strict regime of physical, educational, behavioural and intellectual training with a view to their reformation and re-instatement into society.
7. Government in conjunction with social partners including the churches should initiate, develop and implement programmes of support to the families of youthful offenders and to strengthen the internal programmes of instruction and rehabilitation.

D. LEGISLATIVE

The Committee urges Government to:-

1. Re-structure the Children and Young Person (CYP) Administration of Justice Act to consolidate all legislation affecting young people and their families to ensure there is one cohesive philosophy for services to children and young persons.
2. Create a family court so that the best interest of the young persons is protected at all times.

3. Integrate the Administration of sixteen (16) – eighteen (18) year old offenders with the Industrial Schools to avoid their confinement with hardened criminals. This will entail the construction of a separate detention facility to accommodate this age group.
4. As an alternative to prosecution, require the Police to consult with or organize a panel of professionals from Rehabilitative Welfare Services, Department of Education, other social service agencies and the Youth Division to work as a team and make decisions and recommendations affecting the future of young persons apprehended for minor criminal activities.
5. Regulate the access which minors have to alcohol by enforcing existing legislation.
6. Strengthen existing scheme of equipping police stations with officers trained in youth work and community relations.
7. Explore ways and means of compensating victims of violent crime and those injured in connection with arrest or the pursuit of offenders.
8. Expand the services of the Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services to include the facilitation of a reparation and mediation service to enable young offenders to come face to face with their victims and thereby focusing on the human consequences of crime.
9. Facilitate young offenders re-integration into the community by expanding income generating vocational industries and extra-mural schemes in Her Majesty's Prison and The Industrial Schools.
10. Pay special attention to family links, particularly the inclusion of fathers in the rehabilitative process, where correctional institutional care is needed.

EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education be mandated:-

1. To ensure, as a matter of urgency, that teachers and students are involved in an ongoing process of producing a relevant framework for effective teaching in the Bahamian context.
2. To place a greater emphasis on “interest-related” teaching. Such a focus in every school will seek to develop cognitive skills around specific topics of interest to students as opposed to teaching from a rigid and all encompassing curriculum. A strong national focus on “interest-related” teaching will require teachers to approach their task with a greater degree of flexibility including conducting surveys and research on the interests and concerns of the students.
3. To place appropriate emphasis on “special education” in the Primary and Secondary systems and require all teachers to be exposed to the principles of “special education” with reference to basic psychology and dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Without this emphasis throughout the system teachers will not be able to function with the requisite degree of flexibility and creativity.
4. To expand the present curriculum from the Primary level upwards to include:-
 - (a) preparation for the world of work.
 - (b) Computer studies.

Both areas reflect concern for the realities of the contemporary society.

These additions to the curriculum should be accompanied by an upgraded syllabus for:-

- (a) Vocational and Technical Training.
- (b) Arts and Crafts

The improved curriculum, properly taught, will reduce significantly the number of graduates without marketable skills.

5. To strengthen the guidance counselling programme at the primary and secondary levels with special emphasis on the reduction of focus on “problem solving” and the exaltation of pro-active counselling. All Guidance Counsellors should be actively involved in providing better links between the primary and secondary systems. An improved and well-structured guidance counselling programme should also include career counseling both at the primary and the secondary level. Attention must also be paid to the need to improve linkages between Guidance Counsellors, School

Social Workers and Attendance Officers. There is also an urgent need for the implementation of a parenting segment to be included within the Family Life Programme;

6. To discontinue social promotion and, at the same time, produce alternative programmes for the “under-achievers”;
7. To place greater emphasis on discipline in the schools including dialogue between teachers, parents and students on the meaning and purpose of discipline. Such dialogue will facilitate a realistic discussion on the function of education and the role of teachers, parents and students in the process. Special attention should be paid to assisting teachers to respond adequately to pressing social problems in the school environment. e.g., violence;
8. To improve the social studies curriculum with greater emphasis on Bahamian history and civics. Students at the primary and secondary levels should be exposed to Bahamian literature to assist in the process of the development of national pride and the reinforcement of a Bahamian identity;
9. To encourage teachers to organize and support after-school activities for interested students and parents;
10. To engage the media in an ongoing creative public awareness campaign to reinforce the importance of education and learning in national development.
11. To strengthen the Pre-School Education Unit of the Ministry of Education to set adequate standards for Pre-School facilities, to monitor and evaluate existing Pre-School programmes, to ensure compliance with standards set by Ministry of Education and to encourage expansion of Pre-School education programmes throughout the Bahamas;

The Committee also recommends that The Government of the Bahamas:-

- (1) Establish a Training/Research Centre for Teachers to provide ongoing monitoring of the educational system with appropriate emphasis on the social, emotional and cognitive needs of Bahamian youth. The Centre should also provide, as a matter of urgency, an ongoing programme of Teacher Training focusing on relevant Teaching and Learning Styles. Such a Centre would also serve as a Bahamian laboratory where flexibility and creativity will be intentionally addressed within the Bahamian context and where educational and other theories would be Bahamianized before adoption into the educational system.
- (2) Re-examine, as an urgent national priority, the present division into Primary (Grades 1-6) and Secondary (Grades 7-12).

It is generally agreed that the present division is not serving the Bahamian youth well in the process of personal development: Therefore, some definitive and informed decisions must be made to improve on the present unsatisfactory situation. However, Government must not approach the task in a bureaucratic manner. No decision should be taken before extensive consultations are held between teachers, officers of the Ministry of Education, parents and representatives of the student population. Special consideration should be given to the views and opinions of Teachers who are best equipped to address the realities of our Bahamian situation and who possess first-hand experience of the issues facing the children under their care at every stage of their development.

Our Committee is of the view that these should be concluded by the end of December, 1994 so that adequate preparation and provision may be made for the school year, beginning September 1995. Our Committee also urges that special consideration be given to the social conditions that impact daily on many of the youngsters in the public school system. We refer especially to the realities of:-

- (a) dysfunctional families;
- (b) absentee parents who expect the school to literally function in ‘loco parents’;
- (c) peer pressure;
- (d) lack of motivation
- (e) proliferation of gangs
- (f) negative lifestyles in a promiscuous society.

All of these factors require a strong, positive, sensitive and caring attitude from the teachers in the system and accentuate the problem of the “internal environment of the school.”

Our Committee is of the view that the present social and environmental concerns in the school tend to support a reversion to the Junior High (Grades 7-9) Senior High (Grades 10-12). We believe that such a division would better assist the personal development of the students in a community of their peers, and would provide teachers with ample scope for more effective teaching. While we are committed to the consultative approach identified above, we wish to

make a strong plea for an appreciation of the need for the educational system to be aware of and responsive to the social and environmental realities of our Bahamian context. In this regard we recognize the need to be in touch with the developments in the education at the regional and international level but we also recognize that priority must be given to the realities of our Bahamian situation. The decisions made will have far-reaching implications for the future development of the young people of this nation as a whole. We attach great significance to a national consultation and we urge Government to take immediate action to commence the dialogue.

- (3) To make adequate provision for additional Attendance Officers to combat truancy and introduce measures to compel parents to take responsibility for attendance of their children at school. Our Committee considers that the present arrangement is inadequate.
- (4) To make every effort to improve the terms and conditions of Teachers in the public system with special attention to the motivation of teachers and other professionals in the service and the provision of forms of recognition for meritorious service.
- (5) To provide as a matter of current policy, special incentives to males to enter the teaching profession. Our Committee considers that the virtual absence of male members of staff in the Primary system is adversely impacting, on the performance of male members of the student body. Our Committee is also of the view that this matter should be addressed as a national emergency requiring special measures to alter the present imbalance.
- (6) To institute a comprehensive National Scholarship system to facilitate the achievers within the system, specially at the Tertiary level. Our Committee is of the view that due attention and recognition should be given to those who are sufficiently motivated to succeed within the system. Too often those perceived as the “problem persons” receive an ordinate amount of attention creating the impression that the “achievers” are taken for granted or not valued in the system.

EMPLOYMENT

1. The Committee views the issue of employment as one requiring a heightened level of attention, particularly as it relates to young people. The Committee considers it necessary for decisive actions to be taken by the Government and taken immediately toward ensuring meaningful employment opportunities.
2. The Committee urges the Government to commission the Department of Statistics to conduct a Youth Labour Survey that will assess, inter alia:-
 - the extent of youth employment in the country;
 - employment by industrial group;
 - employment by geographic distribution; and
 - level of training.
3. Such a survey should be used by Government, in conjunction with the private sector, to develop a five-year youth employment programme for the country.
4. The Committee recommends that every effort be made to enlist unemployed young people voluntarily in the National Youth Development Programme.” Such efforts should include recruitment at the neighbourhood level by trained youth officers, referrals by employers who have/could not hire an applicant, and social agencies including the courts, coming in contact with such young persons.
5. The Committee endorses the view that areas of the Bahamian economy such as agriculture, fishing and manufacture offer opportunities to generate many jobs. The Committee recommends that “turn key” operations be established in these areas. Such operations would involve the hiring of suitable consultants, national or international, who would establish the ventures and turn them over to qualified young persons selected to be involved with the venture. Funding for the venture can be secured through contributions from international organizations, private sector and, to a lesser extent, government.
6. The Committee recommends that a plan of action be developed throughout the public sector for the meaningful participation of young people and their mobility within the sector. Special effort should be made for young persons within the employ of the public sector to be advised of the requirements, opportunities and benefits of promotion within the sector. Government should use strong moral suasion to encourage the private sector to adopt a similar posture.

7. The Committee recommends the formation of a “micro-enterprise zone,” offering shared cost of operation to youth enterprises. The land and infrastructure for the zone should be supplied by Government but the ongoing operation of the zone should be self-supportive.

The Committee recommends that every effort be made to provide suitable levels of venture capital for youth enterprises and that red tape to accessing such capital be non-prohibitive.

LIFESTYLE ISSUES

SEXUAL PROMISCUITY

The Committee recommends the following:-

1. AIDS should be treated as a matter of URGENT national priority. All social partners should be challenged to support the efforts of the National AIDS Programme.
2. The churches with the assistance of Government should initiate a National Programme to train youth leaders and persons who teach or lead young people to provide information and models of behaviour for youth.
3. The development and implementation of a multi-media sex education campaign, focusing on the following:-
 - Parenting;
 - Appropriate sexual behaviour;
 - Contraception;
 - Monogamous relationships;
 - Reduction of extra-marital relationships;
 - Dating
4. The churches are challenged to develop, produce and disseminate curricula and media kits focusing on the Christian perspective for developing life skills, preparation for adulthood and shaping of values.
5. The society, including the youth, is challenged to accept and promote the avoidance of sex before marriage, as the appropriate lifestyle, and fidelity as a noble pursuit.
6. The Government, in conjunction with other social partners, should establish community centers to assist young people to participate in healthy leisure activities.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

1. Government should develop a multi-service center for young people which would provide a broad range of prevention/intervention services.
2. Government and social partners should initiate, develop and conduct a major multi-media campaign highlighting the dangers of the use and abuse of alcohol and all other drugs.
3. The encouragement of the involvement of the Church in programmes aimed at the treatment of drug users, the prevention of drug use to have a more meaningful impact in the lives of young people.
4. Government should strictly enforce existing laws as they relate to alcohol purchases by minors.

MEDIA

1. A “Media Summit” be convened by Government, at which the Government and all social partners particularly the media, advertisers, sponsors will be invited to consider a national policy on the media and to identify ways and means to establish stronger indigenous media;
2. The Bahamas Broadcasting Corporation place special emphasis on the production of appropriate youth programmes for television and radio;
3. The private sector be encouraged to assist Government in the procurement of a publicly accessible “production studio;”

4. Government provide an adequate information resource center;
5. Government encourage sponsorship of local educational programmes by the creation of fiscal incentives;
6. The private sector be encourage to promote and sponsor productions that convey a sense of Bahamian identity;
7. The Government and private sector recognize the need and make provision for the creation of a youth segment of the news programme in all sections of the media;
8. The Ministry of Youth and Culture be requested to vigorously promote a “media club” concept in the secondary schools;
9. Government be urged to adopt as a matter of policy, stringent monitoring of media and related materials through labeling and relevant legislation;
10. Advocacy groups be encourage to monitor and highlight concerns about the media before the public.
11. Government be requested to create a National Media Council to expand monitoring and control of all sector of the media.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the special issues identified by the Committee there were seven areas which could be highlighted as having wide impact on the development of our youth. These areas were discussed in the section of the report titled “Findings.” While these issues do not have the immediacy or saliency of those underscored in the “Special Issues” section of the report, they have singularly and collectively impacted the formation and development of our youth.

The following are the areas of wider impact for which programme recommendation are offered:-

- 1) Development of Community Centres;
- 2) Housing and Urban Restoration;
- 3) Proper Zoning and Physical Planning;
- 4) Public Transportation and Traffic Management;
- 5) Environment;
- 6) Politics;
- 7) Potential for Brain Drain.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTRES FOR THE BAHAMAS

With the ever-increasing demand to provide wholesome activities for our youth and communities there is the urgent need for the development of community centers at the neighbourhood level or constituency level. The Committee wishes to recommend that Community Centres be established as part of the fabric of each community to assist young people and adults with life long skills and personal enrichment programmes. Such facilities can rekindle the sense of community participation and cooperation among the people who must take charge of their communities.

The strategy employed by the Government to ensure that at least all park is in each constituency throughout the Bahamas is an important step in the right direction. Equally important is the need for a policy decision to ensure that a community center is a part of each community.

These programmes will be developed to satisfy the educational, social, economic, spiritual, cultural, sporting, civic and community service needs. Additionally, areas of day care, children’s programmes, after-school programmes, teen programmes, school drop-outs and adult education and senior citizens activities can be provided at the Community Centre. The goal should be to establish a community center in each neighbourhood or settlement.

The Committee recommends use of the following as community centers:-

- School buildings and sporting facilities;
- church halls;
- lodge halls;
- existing Community Centre buildings;
- parks and playgrounds.

The Committee recommends the engagement of Community Leaders in the following:-

1. the conduct of a community survey to identify programmes needed;
2. the identification of key people in each area who can assist and be apart of the planning committee;
3. the identification of physical, human and financial resources in the community

The Ministry of Youth can assist with the research, programme planning and administrative functions of the Centre, through the provision of materials, supplies, technical advice and some financial outlays.

The goal of the Ministry will be to provide districts Youth, Sports and Community Affairs officers assigned to different centers within New Providence to assist Community Centre Development and Programming. Each Family Island will also have a Youth, Sports or Community Coordinator.

The following are suggested activities:-

Literacy Classes	Agricultural Projects
Leadership Training	Small Business Development
Ceramics Classes	Straw Work
Sewing Classes	Floral Art Classes
Community Meeting	Home Economics
Cultural Programmes	Sports/Recreational Programmes
Woodwork Classes	Crime Watch Committee
Souvenir Development	Work Skills Job
Computer Literacy	

Programming

The Committee recommends that a quarterly curriculum of activities identified by the community be adopted. An elaborate programme is not required initially.

Budget

The Committee's view is that the key role of the Community Development Association will be that of fund-raising and that Government should provide a grant to assist with administrative and operating costs.

Conclusion

Government should facilitate the development of Community Centres at the constituency level. Is it its responsibility to equip and assist the local leadership with getting it done. The Pilot Centre previously conducted at the Baillou Hills Complex served to show how this could be done. Strategically for New Providence, the Committee suggests four centers and a concentration on our Family Islands. Mediating institutions such as churches and community organizations along with the business community should be involved in assisting to ensure that some structured programmes are in place in the community where they are located.

The following Action Plan for Community Association is recommended:-

1. Finalize plans and proposals, and notify Ministry.
2. Determine physical equipment need.
3. Begin survey of service area.
4. Plan for initial activities.
5. Determine initial staff volunteer assignments.
6. Make arrangements for equipment and prepare building.
7. Plan for commencements promotional campaign.
8. Appoint and involve local advisory group.

9. Begin activities.
10. Evaluate activities.
11. Prepare final short and long range plans for Centre.
12. Identify areas for expansion.
13. Establish a Community Development Association with a constitution and with ongoing management.
14. Involve young people and use their energy and enthusiasm.

HOUSING AND URBAN RESTORATION

The Committee notes that a sizeable number of young persons and children are still accommodated in sub-standard housing. While the Committee applauds the progress made in the extension of affordable housing to large numbers of Bahamians through various housing programmes, the need for the extension of such programmes is clearly evident. The Government should in cooperation with the private sector expand affordable housing opportunities for a greater number of Bahamians.

The Committee has observed with chagrin the urban blight in areas of New Providence and Grand Bahama. The strengthening of a policy on urban renewal and the implementation of such a policy are seen as critical to the restoration of communities. The Government should encourage and lead the effort to rehabilitate the older communities of New Providence and Grand Bahama.

PROPER ZONING AND PHYSICAL PLANNING

The Committee holds the view that children and young people to a large extent are products of their environment and maintains that their physical environment should be so planned that it would be conducive to their proper growth and development. The Committee noted the continuing haphazard development of sub-divisions and communities throughout The Bahamas. While correct steps had been made to ensure proper zoning, there were still existing unwarranted commingling of the commercial with the residential in many neighbourhoods.

The Committee recommends that Government examine the existing status of communities to determine zoning needs, establish strict zoning codes and follow a policy of strict adherence.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Committee noted that traffic congestion was an ever-present occurrence on the thoroughfares and main road arteries contributing to frustration among motorists and the retardation of the movement of considerable numbers of persons at critical times in the day. The Committee advocates the adoption and implementation of a realistic policy which would encourage the use of public transportation. The Committee is of the view that a concomitant policy on traffic management should also be adopted. Such a policy be comprehensive in scope to include the limitation of the use of private vehicles, the diversion of traffic etc.

ENVIRONMENT

The Committee notes the disregard for the care and protection of the environment which has led to its deterioration. The Committee is conscious of the critical need for a safe and hygienic environment for present and future generations.

The Committee recommends the inclusion of environmental programmes in the school curricula and the sensitization of teachers to the importance of maintaining a clean environment. Government and youth organizations should initiate programmes for the inculcation of environmentally friendly values and practical means for the preservation, protection and improvement of the environment.

Government should enforce the laws concerning the abuse of the environment and legislate, where necessary, for the overall presentation, protection and improvement of the environment. An aggressive and sustained national campaign concerning the care and protection of the environment should be initiated and developed.

POLITICS

The Committee views with some regret the polarization engendered by the partisan nature of politics as practiced in The Bahamas. The Committee is of the view that the fundamental rights and freedoms regarding expression and conscience enshrined in our Constitution should be fully respected. The appreciation of the rights and privileges enjoyed by each citizen by our youth is critical to the future harmony and stability of our society.

The Committee maintains that a programme of civic education should be introduced in the school curricula. Such a programme should emphasize the principles of the Rule of Law, the separation of powers doctrine, one-man-one vote, the nature of parliamentary governments etc. A conscious effort should be made to include young persons in the decision-making processes as meaningful participants. The Committee advocates the development of fora in which youth are exposed to the practices and processes of decision-making and participation.

POTENTIAL BRAIN-DRAIN

The Committee notes that skilled and educated young persons are not afforded in all cases opportunities for employment that are commensurate with their aspirations and levels of skill and education. The Committee also notes an accompanying frustration among such young persons who have not been able to enter the labour market.

The Committee recommends that the guidance programmes in the schools be strengthened to include qualified guidance counselors and the implementation of a programme of career development based on a realistic assessment of the labour market requirements. The involvement of the private sector in the initiation and development of such a programme and a broader programme of public information is essential, particularly as it relates to the re-direction of such persons.

*Profiles: Select Civil Oriented Civil Society
Organizations
Their Roles, Strengths and Opportunities as They see it*

Urban Renewal Commission

The Urban Renewal Commission was appointed by the Prime Minister in 2003 to bring together public, private and community based organizations and community leaders to address the range of social and environmental challenges particular to the 'Over the Hill' urban communities of the Bahamas.

The Commission is made up of representatives of public agencies including the Police Force, the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Housing, as well as community and NGO leaders from a range of organizations. There are over 30 persons sitting on the Commission. The work of the Commission is undertaken through 8 subcommittees which plan and oversee the range of programs and initiatives undertaken by the Commission.

The Commission is headed by noted psychologist and civic activist, Dr. David Allen, who works with a small secretariat, manned by workers on loan from the public service. He notes that the key objectives of the organization are to reshape and renew the inner city landscape of the Bahamas, starting in New Providence. This would be accomplished through coordinated public sector action and focused community development initiatives.

The Commission began work in what is known as the Farm Road Area, building upon the efforts of the Police in its *Farm Road Initiative*. The Commission has since expanded its efforts to neighboring urban communities.

Key actions and successes to date include the following:

- Breakdown of abandoned buildings
- Removal of derelict vehicles
- House Repairs
- Cleaning of overgrown areas
- Organization of Youth Band
- Management of Summer Youth Camps
- Development of after school programs
- Establishment of Computer Labs
- House to House demographic and welfare survey
- Co-parenting Clinic for at risk kids

Dr. Allen notes that the environmental clean up efforts has not only boosted the morale and community spirit of the residents of these areas, it has caused the criminally minded to shift their

activities outside of these areas by removing the abandoned buildings and derelict vehicles used with great effect to aid their efforts. Also, the involvement of the Police Community Outreach arm in the summer programs and youth bands has led to enhanced public trust of and support for law enforcement efforts.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Urban Renewal Commission has tremendous potential as a facilitator of the coordinated public sector/civil society action that is necessary for long term urban rehabilitation. Already, it has provided a vehicle to introduce and execute publicly funded social and community programs in an efficient and timely manner, bypassing complicated and lengthy bureaucratic processes.

To strengthen the reach and efficacy of the Commission, attention will have to be paid to strategic planning for the organization - defining and documenting its short and medium term plans and goals. The Commission has not yet articulated a work-plan or listing of potential projects to take it through a particular period; nor has the URC formally established a mechanism for assessing and evaluating programs under execution.

The referenced strategic plan and defined evaluation mechanisms are critical to allow the Commission to choose among priorities, to assess the optimal utilization of civil society partners or to determine the success of programs undertaken by the URC.

Safe Bahamas

Safe Bahamas was founded in 2001 in response to findings of the National Commission of Crime Report which called for coordinated community action to fight crime and violence. It states as its key objectives the following:

- ❑ Resource Allocation – directing financial contributions from business and the broader community into programs which can have a measured impact on preventing and reducing crime,
- ❑ Collaboration within Civil Society - encouraging greater consolidation of social initiatives and enhanced cooperation among civic and community based organizations;
- ❑ Advocacy – promoting new and improved methods and policies aimed at preventing and reducing crime;
- ❑ Public Awareness – undertaking an aggressive and ongoing public relations effort to help shift cultural acceptance of certain crimes and to promote personal responsibility in shaping a safer community.

The organization is non-political and non-religious and is managed by a volunteer board of directors. Modeled after the *United Way* organizations internationally, the organization has pushed the notion of ‘corporate management’ within the civic sector – including the incorporation of the entity, the development and publication of a long term business plan, the establishment of an office staffed by professionals, the undertaking of annual audits and the preparation of annual reports for the benefit of stakeholders and the general public.

The organization has enjoyed some measure of success over its short-life, mobilizing corporate funds and channeling them in a structured way to fully articulated programs that – as required by Safe Bahamas – provide a full budget and clear performance targets. Jimmy Campbell, Chairman of Safe Bahamas, notes also that the organization has provided “substantial” leadership in facilitating cooperation and collaboration in the social sector through the organization’s efforts in developing the nascent *Bahamas Council of Voluntary Social Services*³⁸ and through its efficient administration of community projects on behalf of the *Urban Renewal Commission*.

Opportunities and Challenges

Safe Bahamas has established a promising track record of professional management of programs undertaken in the non-profit sector. Because of its focus on strategic planning, crisp project execution, and high levels of accountability and transparency, the organization has established credibility within the public and private sectors in respect to its capacity to plan, execute and evaluate social programs.

The organization has been challenged in several ways: Safe Bahamas was established just prior to the economic downturn of late 2001, which has restricted expected corporate contributions – a key component of the organization’s fund-raising strategy. The necessity of an office presence and full time professional staff has meant a relatively costly administrative structure. These elements have combined to restrict the funds available for grant awards to qualifying NGOs and delayed implementation of the full strategic plan of Safe Bahamas.

The organization also has had difficulty in conveying to the general public the holistic approach it espouses; this has made it difficult to obtain broad based public buy-in. The public, accustomed to organizations that run programs, has yet to embrace the conceptual notion of an umbrella type organization that works to empower and hold-to-account the traditional project-executing NGOs.

Further, while the organization has developed excellent rapport and dialogue with related government agencies – including the Police Force and the Ministry of National Security – Safe Bahamas has yet to formalize its relationship with the public sector. Given the organization’s capacity for program development and oversight, public sector agencies may find that there are substantial advantages to challenging their social outreach programs through an independent entity that is structured to help ensure efficient and accountable project execution.

Bahamas Association of Social Health

The Bahamas Association of Social Health (BASH) is a leading center for rehabilitating drug addicts in the country. Formed in 1990, this NGO addresses drug abuse in the country through its educational and public awareness efforts and its voluntary in-patient dormitory facility for men seeking rehabilitation from drug addiction.

³⁸ The *Bahamas Council of Voluntary Social Services* is an umbrella organization in the development stages at the time of writing. The organization is intended to allow civic oriented non-profit organizations to come together to create a singular voice for public advocacy and to dialogue on and develop issues of mutual concern

The stated aims of the organization are “to substantially reduce crime, violence, and drug abuse in our communities [and] to promote the social health of our communities by developing effective substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.”³⁹

Mr. Terry Miller, Executive Director of BASH, sees a clear relationship between drug abuse and the level of crime and violence, noting that “more than 90% of our clients have been to jail as a direct result of their drug addiction.... Many of these persons have at various times been involved in some form of violence from child and spouse abuse to murder. Once drug free and in recovery they generally become positive members of society.”

A key thrust of BASH is its ongoing efforts to become financially self-sufficient, by developing commercial opportunities on the grounds of its facility. The organization is working on the construction of a welding and iron-wrought goods shop; it already has a growing plant nursery from which plants and other agricultural products are sold to the public. Aside from the income potential, Mr. Miller explains that these initiatives provide focus, skills development and esteem building for residents of the center.

Opportunities and Challenges

BASH has developed very innovative and successful approaches to the rehabilitation of drug offenders, providing them with a strong and structured facility to see addicts through the toughest parts of their rehabilitation. Such a facility is critical given the clear relationship of drug (including alcohol) use and abuse to crime and violence.

The effectiveness of BASH is restricted primarily by its limited human and financial resources. To realize fully its plans for self-sufficiency, the organization will need to develop a comprehensive business plan – including human resource requirements – and use this plan to help raise the funding necessary to implement the plan.

An important element to BASH’s long term relevance will be the approach of the public authorities to drug prevention and abuse management. As the government articulates and refines its drug policy, BASH can become an important agent in the delivery of services geared at drug prevention and treatment of addicts.

Crisis Centre

The Crisis Centre began operation in 1983 as the Woman’s Crisis Center. The organization states its objectives to:

- i. fight to eliminate sexual and domestic violence;
- ii. empower victims of sexual and domestic violence;
- iii. alert and educate the public to the trends of sexual and domestic violence;
- iv. promote partnerships;

³⁹ Interview with Terry Miller, Director of BASH, November 2003

- v. facilitate and promote safety and healing of survivors;
- vi. fight for legislative and societal change in respect to abuse issues;
- vii. provide a resource center of family, violence literature

The organization has proven to be an effective public advocate, lobbying successfully for changes in public policy and legislation, such as the adoption of a Rape Shield Law, the criminalization of incest within The Bahamas, and the formation of the Sexual Offenses Unit in the Police Force.⁴⁰

The organization maintains a large network of volunteers who provide one on one counseling to victims of rape and abuse. The Crisis Centre runs a hotline that permits persons to call 24 hours a day if they are in need immediate assistance or guidance.

Over the years, the centre has built up a large library of literature on prevention and avoidance of domestic violence situations and has done much work to disseminate this information through schools, churches and other civic organizations.

Opportunities and Challenges

Given the relatively high levels of sexual violence and domestic abuse with The Bahamas, clearly there is a significant role for organizations like the Crisis Centre. For its part, the Centre has, since inception, provided invaluable service and guidance to many hundreds of persons during very traumatic periods of their lives. Additionally, the organization has contributed mightily to creating greater public awareness on avoiding and addressing domestic violence issues.

Key challenges to the organization revolve around human and financial resources. As noted, the organization relies heavily on a body of volunteers and currently has only one full time paid employee. Moving forward, it will be important to obtain additional qualified staff members to ensure appropriate program development and implementation. It also will be important to ensure that both volunteers and staff are appropriately trained and capable to deal with the very stressful and sensitive case issues that the Centre addresses from time to time.

The fact that The Bahamas is an archipelagic nation also creates challenges for the Crisis Centre. As noted in this report, key observers believe that there are high levels of under-reporting of domestic violence in the country – especially in the Family Islands. This under-reporting is compounded by the fact that, outside of the Police, many victims in these islands do not have access to an organization like the Crisis Centre to seek counseling or refuge from damaging domestic situations. The Crisis Centre notes that it will be important to find ways to extend their services and programs into the Family Islands.

Coupled with the extension of programs must be greater attention to ensuring that potential clients are aware of the availability of services offered by the Centre. This would in essence mean the ‘advertising’ of the Centre through the media, and its attendant significant costs. Here,

⁴⁰ Interview with Sarran Gibson, Director of the Crisis Centre, December 2003

efforts must be made to partner with the media outlets to run public service announcements for the Centre at minimal cost to the organization.

To optimize the efficacy of the Crisis Centre, there will be a need to further define and solidify the relationship between the Centre and related government agencies. Currently, the Centre enjoys a positive and productive relationship with the Police and health agencies, where suspected cases of domestic abuse are often referred to the Centre. Yet, many of these arrangements are informal and dependent upon the personal relationships developed over the years between the managers of the respective organizations.

The Crisis Centre can play a leading role in any public policy initiatives to combat domestic violence and rape. The organization has demonstrated the ability to assist victims of domestic offenses, to educate individuals and the general public on appropriate inter-personal relationship skills and to mobilize volunteers for one-on-one case management. Thus, where there are existing such initiatives within public sector agencies, efforts should be made to ensure that program overlap is minimized and that responsibilities be parsed in a manner that works to the respective strengths of the Crisis Centre and the relevant public agencies.

Youth Empowerment and Skills Training Institute (YEAST)

The Youth Empowerment and Skills Training Institute (YEAST) was established in 1997 to provide an alternative educational environment for young men aged 16-20 who had been expelled from traditional schools.

The program runs for one year, beginning with a military style boot camp in Eleuthera⁴¹ that runs for six weeks. The intent of the boot camp is to instill a sense of self-discipline, teamwork and self-esteem among the participants.

Following the boot-camp, participants attend a day-school facility in New Providence that mixes equal part academic and vocational skills with personal development courses on matters such as hygiene, personal and sexual health, inter-personal relationships and fatherhood, and drug and alcohol education.

At the end of the year, the young men who graduate either return to the traditional school environment or seek out employment if they are at the school leaving age.

This year saw two new elements of YEAST's program: The organization worked with Programme SURE, a publicly funded alternative education program for 'at-risk' young men, to accept 22 students from the latter into the Boot Camp. Also, YEAST accepted, on a trial basis, a selected number of students aged 11-15 to attend the camp and then return to their regular school environment.

Deacon Jeffery Lloyd, director of YEAST, described the inclusion of the younger students as "revealing", expressing the view that that the younger students seemed more responsive to the environment and thus more apt to imbed the lessons learned over the long run.

⁴¹ Eleuthera is one of the more developed Family Islands with a population of 11,000. It is situated to the east of New Providence

YEAST is part of the outreach of the Catholic diocese, which provides a substantial portion of the operating funds. Participants must also pay tuition fees. The organization receives a small subvention from the government and also depends upon contributions and donations from corporate and private citizens.

Opportunities and Challenges

YEAST has demonstrated great promise in turning around the lives of many young men who had been deemed irredeemable by many. Noteworthy elements of the program include the emphasis on personal responsibility and discipline, together with intense focus on basic life skills training, many elements of which are new to the participants who tend to come from unstructured, dysfunctional home environments.

The organization wants to expand the size and scope of its activities, increasing its enrollment size from 25 young men and reducing the age of entry to 11 years of age. Ultimately, YEAST would wish to operate a facility which can house hundreds of at-risk young persons for a full year – in a dormitory environment away from the often negative environment of their homes, neighbourhoods and peer groups.

A key challenge to YEAST and similar organizations is the competition and duplication within this sector. The organization is but one of several such initiatives geared at providing alternative education, training and ongoing support for at-risk young men. Others include Program SURE and the Operation Redemption, which are both funded substantially through direct government support. Despite the cooperative effort between YEAST and Program Sure in respect of the boot camp this year, insufficient attention has been given to date to assessing the relative strengths of these organizations – so as to determine the opportunities for cooperation and collaboration on key elements of their respective programs.

Accordingly, for YEAST and other similar organizations to obtain optimum effectiveness over time, there must be some encouragement and direction from the policy level to ensure that resources and responsibilities are assigned in a manner that would allow for achievement of best results.

In a practical sense, this may mean that YEAST would provide the strategic direction, management and curriculum development of ‘at-risk youth male programs’, given their demonstrated innovations and administrative efficiency – while the public sector would focus on the establishment of proper facilities and appropriate resource allocation – areas in which it enjoys a clear advantage.

Other organizations could provide for variations in client focus – for instance, dealing with participants with specific challenges ranging from academic difficulties to emotional and behavioral problems, to recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, to those whose religious or ethnic backgrounds would require an alternate approach.

This consolidation of effort takes on great urgency given the fact that the young Bahamian male is more likely than any other demographic group to become involved in crime. Indeed, senior police officers have noted that it is a relatively small group of young male offenders who create the majority of serious crime problems.⁴² Thus, an important medium and long term effective

⁴² Interview with Superintendent Hulan Hanna, January 2004

response to crime will be the capacity to identify and redress, in an efficient way, 'at-risk' young men before they do become perpetrators of serious violent and criminal activity.

Annex XI – Outline of Programs Approved & Funded by Safe Bahamas

<i>Program</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Program Synopsis</i>
Adolescent Growth Groups	<i>Christian Counseling Centre</i>	Co-sponsorship of the reintroduction and expansion of a group and family counseling program for preadolescents and adolescents. Safe Bahamas will underwrite the cost for 26 participants in the program with the understanding that at least 24 of these students must come from the public school system upon referral from guidance counselors or other administrators within the schools.
Assessment of Institutional Needs of Bahamian NGOs	<i>College of The Bahamas Research Unit</i>	Co-sponsored by the Local Inter-American Development Bank office, this research project examined the training and resource needs of Bahamian non-profit organizations and established recommendations and guidelines to enable local entities to formulate and executive effective programs.
Character Development ‘Boot’ Camp	<i>YEAST</i>	Part of the YEAST curriculum, this program takes YEAST’s incoming ‘trainees’ to Eleuthera for an intense 4 week leadership and personal development training session for the young men in the program. The discipline and teamwork elements are administered by trained members of the Bahamas Defence Force. This is the second year that Safe Bahamas has helped to fund the ‘boot’ camp.
Coping with Change Seminar Series	<i>Safe Bahamas & CEO Network</i>	Secretariat and Funding for a seminar series for workers and self-employed individuals most affected by the recent economic downturn. Participants benefited from presentations on financial planning, stress management, and personal safety and security.
Domestic Violence Workshop	<i>The Crisis Centre</i>	Sponsorship of the first in a series of workshops developed to sensitize social sector professionals on matters related to domestic violence, and the sensitive administration of any such cases. The aim is the dissemination of information and expertise that will enable these professionals to identify and effectively address such matters.
Fox Hill Karate Club	<i>St. Anselm’s Hollie Lottie Cartwright Youth Centre</i>	This program takes children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Fox-Hill community and introduces them to the discipline and life-skills training associated with the martial arts.
Grand Bahama Half-Way House	<i>Grand Bahama YMCA</i>	Support for the refurbishing and outfitting of a Half-way House facility for former inmates of penal facilities and residents of children’s homes in Grand Bahama
New Providence Half-Way House	<i>Prison Fellowship Bahamas</i>	Support for interior finishing work for the new Half-Way house for former prison inmates.

<i>Program</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Program Synopsis</i>
NGO Symposium	<i>Safe Bahamas</i>	This workshop (i) officially introduced the non-profit (NGO) sector community to Safe Bahamas, explaining how the organization intends to engage the sector and (ii) provided a forum to allow the Bahamian NGO community to begin shaping a common agenda on matters of mutual interest.
Pride Youth Programs Outreach	<i>Bahamas P.R.I.D.E</i>	Bahamas P.R.I.D.E. is an outreach program which seeks to promote a drug and alcohol free lifestyle for young people. The program focus is to expand their outreach and presence on school campuses in New Providence, Eleuthera, Long Island and Andros, while increasing active membership by 300 percent. The grant from Safe Bahamas is to underwrite the cost of audio equipment needed for presentations and the cost of publication and duplication of resource material and information.
Public Education on Personal Safety	<i>Safe Bahamas & Royal Bahamas Police Force</i>	Development and publication of several different brochures for mass distribution on issues related to security of person and property and on identification and defusing of problem situations
Re-launch of Crimestoppers	<i>Crimestoppers Foundation</i>	Grant to support the re-launch the Crime-stoppers Program. The Crime Stoppers Foundation had placed emphasis on reshaping and refocusing the program to ensure greater public awareness of and participation in the program. A key feature of the “new” program is the utilization of the Miami-Dade Crime-Tipsters organization which has the resident infrastructure and expertise, and provides an important degree of anonymity to would-be tipsters. The contribution of Safe Bahamas will support the ongoing operation of the program.
Restorative Justice in the Bahamas	<i>The Roman Catholic Diocese</i>	Co-sponsorship of a series of seminars, raise awareness locally on the concept of ‘Restorative Justice’, examine the experience of other jurisdictions in the execution of the process, and determine the prospects for introduction of this judicial mechanism in the Bahamas
YAV Discipleship program	<i>Youth Against Violence</i>	This ‘Discipleship program’ takes youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds and neighbourhoods (with emphasis on persons involved in gang activity) for weekly training and fellowship activities geared at teaching a range of life skills: interpersonal communication; grooming & etiquette; financial management; spiritual development, etc.

Annex X - SELECT Bahamian NGOs with mandate that impacts upon Crime and Violence Reduction

ORGANIZATION	TITLE	FIRSTNAME	SURNAME	POSITION	PHONE	FAX
AIDS Secretariat	Ms.	Christine	Campbell	Director	325-5120/1	325-5113
Bahamas Association for Social Health	Mr.	Terry	Miller	Executive Director	356-2274	356-5252
Bahamas Boys Brigade Association	Mr.	Ellis	Bodie-Young	President		323-6852/ 323-8197
Bahamas Family Planning Association	Mrs.	V. Theresa	Burrows	Executive Director	325-1663	325-4886
Bahamas Girls Brigade Association	Rev.	Beryl	Francis Culmer	Director	323-5000	356-3345
Bahamas Girls Guides Association	Ms.	Louise	Barry	Chief Commissioner	322-4342	322-4342
Bahamas National Pride Association	Mr.	Alpheus	Ramsey	Executive Coordinator	326-3330-1	356-0406
Bahamas National Trust	Mr.	Gary	Larsen	Executive Director	393-1317	393-4978
Bahamas Red Cross	Mrs.	Marina	Glinton	Director General	323-7370	323-7404
Brothers Against Crime & Killing	Mr.	Drexel	Deal	President	356-4716	
Christian Counselling Center/Triple C Ltd.	Pastor	Frederick	Arnett	Executive Director	323-7000	323-5075
Committee for a Better Bahamas	Mr.	Jeremiah	Duncombe		322-5110	341-0488
Department of Social Services	Ms.	Melanie	Zonicle	Director	326-0526	323-8672
Dept. of Rehabilitative Welfare Services	Mrs.	Sharon	Farquharson	Director	322-6317/8	325-0134
Drug Action Services	Mr.	Louis	Butler	Co-Chairman	322-2308/9	326-7688
Governor General Youth Awards Program	Ms.	Denise	Mortimer	Chairperson	328-4420/ 477-0561	328-4420
National Drug Council	Mr.	William	Weeks	Chairman	325-4633	325-8442

Annex X - SELECT Bahamian NGOs with mandate that impacts upon Crime and Violence Reduction

ORGANIZATION	TITLE	FIRSTNAME	SURNAME	POSITION	PHONE	FAX
Pathfinders	Pastor	Eric	Clarke	Director	341-4021	341-4088
Programme SURE	Mr.	Joseph	Rolle	Director	341-2959	341-2958
Project Read	Mrs.	ArthurLue	Rahming	Director/Administrator	394-2426	394-2426
Project TIME	Mr.	Shelton	Burrows	Director	324-5244	
Royal Ambassadors Association	Mr.	Larry	Stubbs	Director	325-2993/ 341-8432	325-1575
Royal Bahamas Police Cadets Corps	Commandant	Quinn	McCartney	Director	325-4546	326-4341
Royal Rangers Boys Club	Mr.	Bruce	Darville	Director	322-8304/ 394-7500	322-4793
Salvation Army	Major	Raphael	Mason	Regional Commander	393-2745	393-2189
Scout Association of The Bahamas	Mr.	Stephen	Cooper	Director	325-2757	326-7845
Teen Challenge Bahamas	Minister	Eric	Fox	Executive Director	341-0613	341-0829
The Haven	Mr.	Mark	Lacey	Director	393-5923	393-6420
YEAST	Mr.	Jeffery	Lloyd	Director	326-5781	326-3308
The Crisis Centre	Dr.	Sandra	Dean-Patterson	Director	364-3574	364-3574
Operation Redemption/Youth Against Violence	Mr.	Carlos	Reid	Director	356-6549	326-7269

Annex XI – What Works in Crime Prevention, Summary Listing

From National Institute of Justice Summary Report, 1998

WHAT WORKS IN CRIME PREVENTION

In families

- Frequent home visits to infants aged 0-2 by trained nurses and other helpers
- Preschool and weekly home visits by teachers
- Family therapy and parent training about delinquent and at-risk preadolescents

In schools

- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organizational development strategies
- Clarifying and communicating norms
- Social competency skills curriculum, such as Life Skills Training (L.S.T.)
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth

In labor markets

- Ex-offender job training

In places

- Nuisance abatement

By Police

- Extra police patrols in high crime hot spots
- Repeat offender units
- Arresting domestic abusers

By criminal justice agencies after arrest

- Incarceration of offenders who will continue to commit crime
- Rehabilitation programs for adult and juvenile offenders
- Drug treatment in prison

WHAT DOESN'T WORK IN CRIME PREVENTION

In communities

- Gun buyback programs
- Community mobilization of residents' efforts against crime

In families

- Home visits by police to couples after domestic violence incidents

In schools

- Individual counseling and peer counseling to students
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.)
- Drug prevention classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals, including self-esteem
- School-based leisure time enrichment programs

In labor markets

- Summer job or subsidized work programs for at-risk youth
- Short-term, non-residential training programs for at-risk youth
- Diversion from court to job training as a condition of case dismissal

By police

- Neighborhood watch programs organized with police
- Arrests of juveniles for minor offenses
- Arrests of unemployed suspects for domestic assault
- Increased arrests or raids on drug market locations
- Storefront police officers
- Police newsletters with local crime information

By criminal justice agencies after arrest

- Correctional boot camps using traditional military basic training
- “Scared Straight” programs whereby minor juvenile offenders visit adult prisons
- Shock probation, shock parole, and split sentences adding jail time to probation or parole
- Home detention with electronic monitoring
- Intensive supervision on parole or probation (ISP)
- Rehabilitation programs using vague, unstructured counseling
- Residential programs for juvenile offenders using challenging experiences in rural settings

WHAT SHOWS PROMISE IN CRIME PREVENTION

In communities

- Gang offender monitoring by community workers and probation and police officers
- Community-based mentoring by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
- Community-based after school recreation programs

In families

- Battered women’s shelter

In schools

- “Schools within schools” that group students into smaller units
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth

- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organizational development strategies
- Improved classroom management and instructional techniques

In labor markets

- Job Corps residential training programs for at-risk youth
- Prison-based vocational education programs for adult inmates
- Dispersing inner-city public housing residents to scattered-site suburban public housing
- Enterprise zones

In places

- Adding a second clerk may reduce robberies in already robbed convenience stores
- Redesigning the layout of retail stores can reduce shoplifting
- Improving training and management of bar and tavern staff
- Metal detectors can reduce weapon carrying in schools
- Airport metal detectors to screen airplane passengers
- Sky marshals on airplanes
- Street closures, barricades, and rerouting
- “Target hardening” or use of strengthened materials and designs
- “Problem-solving” analysis unique to the crime situation at each location

By police

- Proactive arrests for carrying concealed weapons
- Proactive drunk driving arrests with breath testing
- Community policing with meetings to set priorities
- Police showing greater respect to arrested offenders
- Polite field interrogations of suspicious persons
- Mailing arrest warrants to domestic violence suspects who leave the scene before police arrive
- Higher numbers of police officers in cities

By criminal justice agencies after arrest

- Drug courts
- Drug treatment in jails followed by urine testing in the community
- Intensive supervision and aftercare of serious juvenile offenders
- Fines for criminal acts