I think you represent a very good example of achievement in violence prevention. I am, therefore, very happy to be here today.

I started my work in the field of violence prevention about 14 years ago when I was appointed as the Director of the Development, Security and Peace Programme, DESEPAZ, for the city of Cali, Colombia. DESEPAZ was designed to reduce and prevent the high burden of violence in Cali, under the leadership of Dr. Rodrigo Guerrero, mayor of Cali (1992-94). In 1994, candidates were running for the position of mayor elsewhere. One of them was Mr. Antanas Mockus, who was running for mayor of Bogotá. Mockus came to Cali to see what we were doing in the city to prevent violence. Although not a public health expert Mockus had the honesty to recognise the importance of the public health approach to prevent violence, and in particular what Guerrero, a Public Health doctor, had accomplished in establishing an integral violence preventive program (DESPEZ); supported by a reliable and timely information system on external causes of death (homicides, traffic crashes and suicides). The Cali’s DESEPAZ programme, launched in mid 1992, was abandoned after Guerrero left office. This is why I am talking about Bogotá rather than Cali. Cali’s violence prevention strategy was not a success, because it was abandoned.

Mockus (first term 1995-1997) is a mathematician and philosopher, who had been professor and President of the National University of Colombia in Bogotá. As a candidate, he wanted to know our experience in Cali. From this experience he took ideas to prepare and implement his own programme for violence and insecurity prevention in Bogota. Fortunately for the city of Bogota another very responsible mayor, Mr. Enrique Peñalosa economist and administrator, was elected for the term 1998-2000 (Peñalosa deserves recognitions and credit for his own achievements, as we will see later) and Mockus was elected for a second term in 2001-2003. The city of Bogotá, with a population of almost seven million people, has many problems. However, as I will show you later, it has since become a kind of landmark for violence prevention.

What I intend to present is how the public health approach for violence prevention can be implemented, enriched, and achieve positive outcomes on violence and crime reduction.

On the negative side before the programme, the homicide level in Bogotá was around 80 per 100,000 inhabitants, which is extremely high. The city had high levels of impunity, police corruption, effects of drugs trafficking (a very serious issue in Colombia), effects of armed conflict, lack of cohesion (Gini coefficient between .52 and .57) and the population had a high sense of insecurity because of robberies, assaults, and poor traffic control.

On the positive side, Bogotá has always been, and still it is, a centre for international culture, sporting, and political events. It is the capital of a democratic country with free elections and free press. The level of education at pregraduate and graduate level is high, with national and internationally recognised universities; and it is an open forum for free debates on different issues. As the capital of Colombia and the centre of political power, Bogotá has a strong national influence and the country holds decentralisation of municipal and local authorities. It is worthy to recognise that Mayor Jaime Castro (1992-1994), did a tremendous job in assuring a healthy city budget with the monetary resources
necessary to implement social and developmental programmes such as the one about to be explained. Finally, it is necessary to highlight that the inhabitants of Bogotá had been demanding action to improve the insecurity caused by violence. Besides being a professor, Mockus had the communicating skills to translate this impetus into proper and reliable dialogue with the city population.

As I already mentioned, Mockus is a philosopher and a mathematician who used the public health approach as a tool for violence prevention. However, he also had his own ideas. His approach is based on a theory that explains peoples social behaviour. In brief, there are three types of regulation of social and individual behaviour in daily life. First is the legal aspect, which is explicit and context specific. Second is the moral aspect, which is implicit and guides decisions based on what each person has learned (it is based on personal background). And thirdly is the cultural aspect which is incorporated into our attitudes as group behaviour. Gratification or punishment is a consequence of people behaviour. On the gratification side, we are all equal before law. If we behave properly we will receive more satisfaction, better communication and dialogue. In the cultural context we will have better verbal communications and better social relationships. However, on the sanction and punishment side, if we behave wrongly we will be punished by law according to the procedures previously defined by law. The moral aspect will involve self-blaming and our own tension will increase as a consequence. On the cultural side we will have social exclusion and shame. Using that particular approach, Mockus said that the high levels of violence and crime in Bogotá could be explained because of the divorce between the legal, moral and cultural aspects of behaviour regulation. However, according to his previous experience, the one aspect that influences wrongdoing most is the cultural norm. This is because it influences how we can behave as a group. The outcome of this theoretical approach was therefore to address a programme aimed to change, modify and improve cultural citizenship, as the way to reduce crime and violence.

Consequently, in 1995 the city launched a programme designed to improve citizens security and coexistence, called building Citizenship Culture. Peñalosa kept Mockus’ main ideas and also added his own democratic emphasis. His main emphasis was therefore, on recovering and rebuilding the city for the people living in or visiting it, with a strong sense of identity and ownership of the city by its inhabitants. Both men had the same idea and recognised that social security was their responsibility. They had to prioritise work on that responsibility at a city wide level.

The public health approach starts with a reliable information system aiming to know the characteristics and demographics of cases of intentional (violent) or unintentional deaths or injuries, as well as certain types of crime. Consequently, the observatory of violence and crime was established. This was implemented as an inter-sector task group, and involved people from the police, the health sector, forensics, and more, to work as a team and create good, reliable information about the situation in the city. There was also the creation of an epidemiological violence committee for the study of causes of death and injury. All the information coming from these bodies were put on the website and are still there. Since there was so much information and data, putting everything on the website was a very important step forward; it allowed people to see what was going on in the city. Internet access is a democratic way to share information. People can browse into the webpage to look for updated information on different programmes and data on violence and crime, among many other things. Graph 1 shows the webpage.

Every month people can scroll down and see what is going on in that particular information system. Based on that information maps for different types of violent acts were created. This map (slide 2), for example, shows the worst areas for injury and the more significant
The following chart refers to Bogotá in 2000 (slide 3). It illustrates how the activities to reduce homicides were planned. Based on what happened in 2000 (top line) the city defined goals for 2001 (middle line), and at the end of 2001 compared data with what was really accomplished (bottom line). As the graph shows, there was a significant reduction of homicides, much better than expected.

This monitoring was conducted continually from month to month, which allowed the city to keep reviewing its expectations. In particular, the police and police authorities could decide who was responsible for what. This enabled the police authorities to be made properly accountable to the Mayor and the Security Council on a regular basis.

Research was conducted to determine exactly what the main risk factors were. The City supported research for programmes using external audits. It also provided funding for local university consultants to conduct research on the main risk factors for family violence, youth violence, child abuse and the others. External groups like the Chamber of Commerce were also monitoring these programmes and ensuring ample coverage in the media of exactly what was going on.

A further step in the violence prevention programme was to determine what projects needed to be implemented. Brief comments on those implemented in Bogotá are presented.

An important example is related to the reduction of alcohol and drug consumption. Changing the cultural norms was a very important part of this programme, so self control and personal control of alcohol consumption was stressed strongly. It is not enough to merely have the police behind the issue and prosecuting people. It was important to have the people themselves realise that self-drinking control is the best alternative. Drinking and driving increases the
16 • PREVENTING VIOLENCE

risk of violence and traffic crashes. Also the decision to reduce the number of hours in which bars are open to the public helped decreased the number of homicides and traffic accident deaths. The media, in general, supported the campaign. This and other campaigns were under the Mayor's control and leadership.

Another project was called "Life is Sacred." For this particular project different activities and strategies were implemented, including voluntary disarmament to reduce homicides. This involved reducing the availability of guns, and also asking people to give up their own arms. Fireworks were prohibited from specific settings because, in this city, anyone could take a firework and explode it. This resulted in high levels of child injury. A key campaign called "No Child to be Burned by Fireworks" stated that the next time a child was burned, a complete ban on fireworks would follow. It happened and it worked. All public places were targeted for that particular project.

Police were very important and received better equipment for a quicker response. Listening communities were established with the police, and regular meetings were held between them. This improved relationships with the police and improved public perceptions of police performance from 30% to 60%. That still may be low, but it is an important improvement. Another initiative was the creation of good and well-equipped libraries in poor neighbourhoods. This helped children receive a better quality of education.

Bicycle routes were created along with many other kinds of public spaces recovered to be used by the city inhabitants as their democratic right to safely use public spaces; and therefore take advantage of the healthy cities approach. There were also conflict resolution projects, family police stations, increased and improved police performance, and the establishing of the House of Justice (Casa de Justicia), located in popular neighbourhoods attended by professionals such as lawyers, social workers, psychologists, where people look for help either to prevent a conflict or to resolve it. As a necessary legal process for conflict resolution "Judges for Peace" at the community level, were established.

"Communication for coexistence" used symbols for urban and social communication. Each one of these symbols has a positive meaning and relates to how people behave. The symbols were displayed prominently in the media so people could understand how to communicate with each other through the hands and make this kind of social communication (slide 4).

Now let's examine some results based on reliable data provided by the Observatory of Violence. You can see here (slide 5) that by the year 1997 there was a peak in the overall number of crimes in the city (more than 25,000). This includes all types of crime. A continued reduction has been observed since that year to levels of 17,000 or less.
As far as homicide rates are concerned, there were approximately 80 per 100,000 in 1993 (slide 6). This rate declined year after year to 21 in 2004. This is still high, so a new goal now needs to be set. In synthesis, homicide had a 71% reduction in the period from 1993 to 2004. Deaths from motor vehicles peaked in 1995, with a rate of 25 per 100,000. In 2003 this had dropped to 8.7 per 100,000, a reduction of 65%.

Slide 6
Homicide rates per 100,000 pop. BOGOTA 1991-2004

Bogotá invested, during Peñalosa’s term (1998-2000), in a very impressive Public Space Recovery Programme. Before the programme the street vendors blocked the sidewalk. Now this is free and people can enjoy these urban spaces. Before the public space was recovered people would park their cars on the sidewalks. After the programme people could walk freely on the sidewalks because cars are no longer parked there (slide 7).

Slide 7

Bogotá has a massive public transportation system (called Transmilenio) with buses but no metro. As an example of the positive effect of Transmilenio and the urban development of the city, Slide 8 shows what happened in an intersection at one of its main highways. In the year 2000, there were 1400 crashes. In the year 2001, there were 240. Pedestrians hit by cars dropped from 800 to 4. The number of people injured was almost 1,000 in 2000. This number dropped to 190 in 2001. People killed by cars dropped from 67 to 4. There were 260 muggings in 2000, but only 95 in 2001. These are the effects of policies aimed at not only reducing violence, but also aimed at creating a better atmosphere in the city.

Slide 8

For this kind of approach to be successful, it is necessary to keep political sustainability. No matter what political party the mayor represents, as long as the programme keeps improving life in the city it must be sustained and led by whoever is in power regardless of new ideas and initiatives. Ten years of continued effort has significantly improved security and reduced violence in Bogotá. In comparison when a programme is abandoned, as it was in Cali, the homicides rate, initially declining, again increased (there is no DESEPAZ programme any more) (slide 9).

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On the other hand, it is also important to recognise that to achieve what Bogota has achieved it is not cheap. It has cost money for the city. More than $150 million has been spent during these years to produce these outcomes. Success demands continued commitment from different Mayors. It has to go beyond single terms of Mayors and become a type of City Policy. Citizens need to keep demanding and getting involved in the issue of security and violence. Furthermore, media and society as a whole need to keep controlling the situation and evaluating what is happening.

The Organization also helps to increase our Government's commitment to violence prevention strategies. In return, we are happy to promote and explain the case of Bogota as a good example.

Thank You.