

URBANIZATION FOR PROSPERITY



**25th SESSION OF THE
GOVERNING COUNCIL**
17 - 23 APRIL 2015 ♦ NAIROBI







I would like to start by extending my congratulations to the new Governing Council President and Bureau for your well-deserved election. You are assuming leadership of the Governing Council at a critical juncture, as this is the last session of the Council before the Habitat III conference, to be held in October 2016. I would also like to thank the outgoing Bureau and President for their contributions to the advancement of the Habitat Agenda and for steering us through the last two years.

In this policy statement, I would like to share with you the strategic direction of UN-Habitat's work, and how this sits in the global themes and challenges of our age. For we meet at a time of unprecedented international dialogue, including on the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals and on climate change. This is also the direction that forms the organization's contribution towards the New Urban Agenda, the envisaged outcome of the Habitat III Conference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joan Clos". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Joan Clos

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director of UN-Habitat



Cities account for
about 70% of the
World's GDP

Urban Prosperity: more than just GDP



Urbanization: the predictable benefits

Urbanization generates tremendous benefits through well-known economic principles, often underestimated by urban decision-makers:

- Economies of location : proximity to urban services and infrastructure increases the value of land and assets.
- Economies of efficiency: as areas urbanize and activities expand, they also specialize and become more efficient if adequately designed for mobility and connectivity.
- Economies of urbanization: the proximity of factors of production lowers transaction costs and generates specialization, productivity and overall value.

No equity without redistribution

The value generated by urbanization needs to be redistributed to citizens through adequate policies that promote inclusion and equity, bringing about decent life for all.

Urbanization as a Tool for Development

At the core of the strategic direction of UN-Habitat's work is an increasingly accepted new vision of the role of urbanization in sustainable development. The rapidly increasing dominance of cities as the habitat of humankind places the process of urbanization among the most significant global trends of the twenty-first century. But urbanization is not simply a demographic phenomenon. It is a broader force which can potentially help the world to overcome some of its major global challenges such as sustainable development, climate change and the global social agenda.

The positive correlation between urbanization and development has long been established by economic history studies. Throughout history, urbanization has been, and continues to be, an engine rather than simply an outcome of development.

At Rio+20, Governments recognized the opportunities offered by urbanization when they stated: "We recognize

that, if they are well planned and developed, including through integrated planning and management approaches, cities can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies. ..." (Paragraph 134 of the Rio+20 outcome document, "The Future We Want")

UN-Habitat's current strategic direction is based on a view that considers urbanization as a way of life, as a process of change from rural to urban ways of living, in physical-spatial, social and economic terms. All over the world, planned urbanization has been the means by which most of the modern socio-economic services, governance models, institutions and infrastructure have been brought to the people, wherever they are.

Urbanization can be harnessed and steered through policy, planning and design, regulatory instruments as well as other human actions to contribute towards the three dimensions of sus-

tainable development, i.e. economic, social and environmental. Moreover, the challenges posed by the current model of urbanization such as global warming, social segregation and urban poverty have global ramifications that, if not addressed adequately, could jeopardize chances of achieving sustainable development.

The contribution of cities to national economic growth, and to economic sustainability in general, is important and is now well understood. Cities presently account for about 70 per cent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). In spite of the comparatively weak global economy since the beginning of the latest financial crisis in 2008, many developing countries have witnessed high economic growth rates of over 7 per cent since 2010. Most of this growth is concentrated in towns and cities. At the same time, well-planned rural human settlements, small villages and market towns play an important role in providing the physical, social and



economic services necessary for rural development, while urban centres of all sizes stimulate rural development by providing markets for agricultural and other primary products. It is for this reason that UN-Habitat strongly advocates for the purposive use of urbanization, by Governments, as an effective instrument and driver of rural prosperity as well as general economic development.

Poverty reduction and social sustainability of development cannot be achieved without addressing the basic needs of the millions of urban dwellers living in poverty, such as access to adequate housing, clean drinking water, sanitation, domestic energy and transport, health and education. Although the world has made progress in reducing poverty since 2000, inequality is rising in the cities of both developing and developed countries. We are witnessing a migration from rural poverty to new urban poverty. In developing countries, slums, which currently accommodate close to 1 billion people, are the physical manifestation of urban poverty and inequality. About 2.5 billion people lack access to safe sanitation and 1.2 billion people lack access to clean drinking

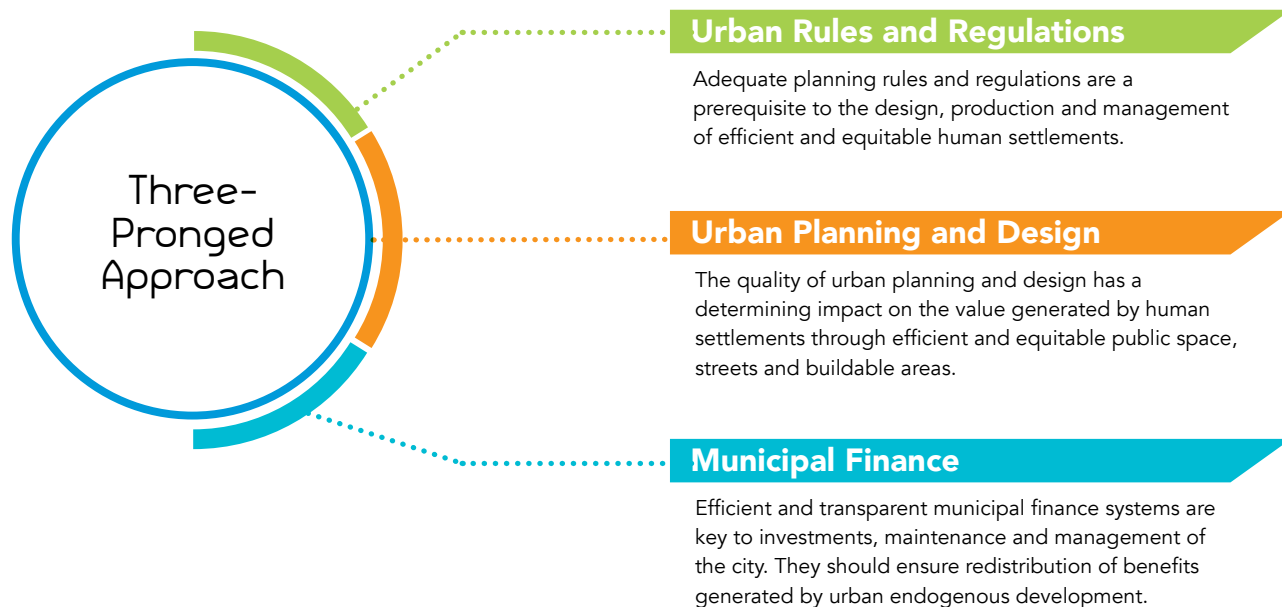
water worldwide. Fewer than 35 per cent of the cities in developing countries have their waste water treated. It is therefore evident that achieving socially sustainable development will require serious action to reduce urban poverty and inequality, especially in the light of the increasing concentration of humanity in towns and cities.

From the environmental sustainability perspective, we now know that cities, mostly in the developed world, contribute up to 70 per cent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions, largely because industrial production and construction activities are concentrated in urban areas. Equally, with increasing urbanization and concentration of large numbers of people, disaster risk is also increasing within towns and cities. Moreover, many recent studies have shown that urban planning and design, in both developed and developing countries, have generally in the last 50 years followed a very repetitive and similar model of urbanization, that we call the "International Model", which has demonstrated good economic performance, but not addressed the social challenge of equity and cohesion, and

has not adequately the global environmental challenge. This has produced sprawling urban areas, many in the form of megacities, hypercities, and large metropolitan regions and urban corridors that are energy inefficient, environmentally unsustainable and, at the end, become economically inefficient. In developing countries, rapid urbanization has resulted in uncontrolled peri-urbanization, most of it informal. It is clear that this model of urbanization is not adequate for economic and social prosperity, nor is it sustainable.

The New Urban Agenda must therefore address all three pillars of sustainable development by firstly, promoting the economic role of cities in national development and recognizing the economic opportunities that they offer; secondly, paying attention to the basic needs of the millions of people living in poverty within towns and cities, including in the urban slums; and finally, addressing global environmental challenges such as climate change, unsustainable energy consumption, and the risk of disaster.

Adequately linking space, processes and resources to nurture better cities through a three-pronged approach to urbanization:



Three-Pronged Approach

Over the last few years, UN-Habitat has been refining its approach to implementing its normative and operational work. Within the framework of the six-year strategic plan for 2016-2019, and building on the new vision of the role of urbanization in sustainable development which I have described, UN-Habitat has adopted a more strategic and integrated approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities of twenty-first century cities and human settlements. This is in contrast to past approaches, which often addressed only the symptoms of the problems posed by urbanization in a piecemeal way. The new strategic approach is based on two premises.

The first premise is the positive correlation between urbanization and development, which I have already mentioned. Urbanization can be a powerful tool for transforming production capacities and income levels in developing countries. It can add quite a substantial input to growth of GDP. However, this requires

a shift in the mind-sets of policymakers, away from viewing urbanization as a problem towards viewing urbanization as a tool for development.

The second premise is that the quality and quantity of urban output is highly related to the quality and characteristics of urbanization. Particularly important are the qualitative design of the urban legislation, the physical plan and the financial urban systems. The expected positive outcomes include increased employment, especially among the youth; improved social and economic integration, diminishing of slums, containment of urban sprawl, increased affordability of housing, containment in the proliferation of the informal sector, more sustainable energy consumption patterns and reduction in the emissions of greenhouse gases. Past approaches tended to address only the manifestations of the problems rather than the underlying systemic issues that, once corrected, can produce a substantial improvement.

The strategic and integrated approach adopted by UN-Habitat in the implementation of the new strategic plan for 2014–2019 is therefore more systemic, going beyond addressing only the symptoms of malfunctioning urbanization. It is integrated, rather than sectoral, transformative rather than fragmentary, and links urbanization and human settlements to sustainable development by focusing on prosperity, livelihoods and employment

A three-pronged approach has been adopted that places emphasis on urban legislation, urban planning and design, and urban economy and municipal finance. These correspond to the first three focus areas of the strategic plan for 2014–2019, and they can be seen as the levers for transforming cities and human settlements into centres of greater environmental, economic and social sustainability. This approach is also referred to as the “three-legged approach” in some of the documentation prepared for this session of the



Manhattan, New York. © Elena Pominova/Shutterstock

Governing Council. A fourth focus area, or sub-programme, urban basic services, has also been prioritized, as large numbers of urban dwellers in developing countries still lack access to adequate basic services, especially water and sanitation as well as reliable waste management services, sustainable mobility solutions and safe domestic energy.

In the area of housing, UN-Habitat is pursuing the right to adequate housing for all through favouring policies that prevent the development of slums. This prevention can only come from a strategic approach to housing. This strategic approach puts 'Housing at the Centre', both at the centre of the city and at the centre of urban policies. It puts housing at the centre of the city, in order to correct the tendencies of mass housing schemes at the peripheries of the cities, which have demonstrated problems world-wide. To properly address the housing challenge, a new urban strategy is required, which includes Planned City Extensions, Planned City Infills and adequate housing policies centred on the affordability of housing for all. This is a central part of the urban strategy.

Equally, in addressing the risk reduction strategies in urban areas, the most effective course of action is to accelerate the improvement of the urban fabric, with the adequate provision of urban common goods, functioning urban infrastructures, including – as a fundamental priority – the adequate provision of common public space. The common space is the guarantor of efficient layout of drainage, sewerage, water supply and other basic services. Proper urban design becomes the fundamental basis in the preparedness for disasters. The examples of disasters have demonstrated the correlation between inadequacies in the urban fabric with the number of victims, in places such as Haiti and Chile. The approaches of 'building back better', or 'rebuilding by design' will enable UN-Habitat to contribute to the implementation of the recently adopted Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Gender and youth are important cross-cutting issues in UN-Habitat's work. Of particular concern is the fact that women continue to be excluded, especially in terms of participation in

urban governance as well as access to the benefits of urbanization, including employment, land, housing and basic urban services. In the last few decades or so, youth unemployment has emerged as a serious urban challenge in both developing and developed countries, often contributing to political unrest. UN-Habitat ensures that gender and youth are mainstreamed in its normative and operational work through appropriate programming as well as through a monitoring system that uses data disaggregated on the basis of gender and age. UN-Habitat also places emphasis on field projects specifically aimed at improving the lives of urban women and youth and at their empowerment.

In implementing its three-pronged approach at the country level, UN-Habitat is strengthening national ownership of the urban and human settlements agenda. A key tool for achieving this is the Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD). The HCPD, a document that contains an agreed programme of urban and human settlement work in the country and signed by both the Ex-



ecutive Director of UN-Habitat and the country's government minister in charge of human settlements, is linked to the country's United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and to the national development plan. Through this, both national ownership and the delivering as One UN approach are strengthened.

As part of strengthening urban legislation and systems of governance,

UN-Habitat has also focused on land in conflict prevention and resolution. Throughout history, border disputes, illegal occupation of the territory of one community or of one state by another as well as grievances arising from inequitable access to land resources have frequently led to violent conflicts. Over the years, UN-Habitat, increasingly through its Global Land Tool Network, has developed many pro-poor and gender responsive tools, guides,

frameworks and approaches which have been used in many countries, including a 'Post-Conflict Land Administration and Peace-Building Handbook' and a UN system-wide 'Toolkit and Guide for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflict'. UN-Habitat has implemented field projects specifically on land and conflict in Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and South Sudan, on the basis of which its approach to this issue has evolved.

When the strategic approach to urbanization is lost

Lack of connectivity



Congestion

Lack of density



Lack of economies of urbanization

Youth unemployment



Poor economic performance

Segregation, gated communities



Urban divide, conflicts and insecurity

Towards the New Urban Agenda

UN-Habitat's contribution to the New Urban Agenda, the outcome document of the Habitat III Conference, is informed by its new strategic approach that I have just outlined. In UN-Habitat's view, the New Urban Agenda should promote sustainable cities and other human settlements that are environmentally sustainable and resilient; socially inclusive, safe and violence-free; economically productive; and better connected to and contributing towards sustained rural transformation. Such a vision should be fully in line with all of the evolving post-2015 sustainable development goals, most particularly the proposed goal on sustainable cities and human settlements.

The ideas that we are proposing as a contribution to the New Urban Agenda represent a paradigm shift towards a new urbanization approach that can better respond to the challenges of our age, optimizing resources to harness future potentials. This new agenda should be universal, rights-based, sectorally and

spatially integrative, inclusive, equitable, people-centred, sustainable and measurable. It should also have the possibility of articulating different scales, from the neighbourhood to the global level, and diverse human settlements, from the rural village and rural service centre, through the small and medium-sized town, to the city and megacity.

Universality, human rights, equality, integration and data revolution have emerged from the current consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals as fundamental principles. These principles should also guide the overall direction of the New Urban Agenda.:

On the basis of its new strategic direction, UN-Habitat strongly believes that action needs to be taken in three areas if urbanization is to be transformative, and that these three areas should be at the core of the New Urban Agenda.

The first is strengthening urban legisla-

tion and systems of governance. Laws, institutions and systems of governance in line with states' international obligations and bound by the rule of law shape the operational principles as well as the stability of organizational structures and institutional and social relationships that underpin the process of urbanization.

The second is developing and implementing national urban policies and reinvigorating territorial planning and urban design. National urban policies amalgamate the dispersed energy and potential of urban centres within a national system or hierarchy of cities and towns. They help to coordinate the work of different sectors and tiers of government, establish the incentives for more sustainable practices, and provide a basis for the allocation of resources. New planning methods and systems can contribute to changing the city's internal structure, form and functionality towards more compact, integrated and connected and sustainable solutions,



such as densification, social diversity and mixed land uses, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable use of natural resources, and adequate public spaces, including vibrant streets.

The third is harnessing the urban economy, including strengthening municipal finance. In order to create employment, urban areas and regions require strong economic growth strategies such as regeneration, cluster development and industrial zones. Strengthening municipal finance is about realigning fiscal authority, responsibility and revenue sharing, i.e. achieving the right balance between different levels of govern-

ment; designing new financial mechanisms and exploring new sources of capital; improving systems of revenue collection; and improving budget management and transparency.

As I have already stated, the major challenges facing cities and human settlements today are an outcome of the inadequacy of these fundamental systems. Addressing these three fundamental areas requires a strategic and integrated approach which is more systemic rather than one which addresses only the symptoms of malfunctioning urbanization; more integrated, rather than sectoral; and transformative rather

than fragmentary. Above all, this strategic and integrated approach must link urbanization to sustainable development.

We believe that concerted action in these three areas may increase economic productivity and enhance equitable growth, improve the wellbeing of the population, improve inclusion and accountability in urban governance, and create multiplier effects that spread across space and through the whole continuum of human settlements, whether rural or urban. But these actions need to be adapted to different circumstances, as there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

Cities and Climate Change

The effects of urbanization and climate change are converging in dangerous ways:

High consumption, high emissions

- Cities consume 78 per cent of the world's energy.
- Cities produce more than 60 per cent of all carbon dioxide and significant amounts of other greenhouse gas emissions, mainly through energy generation, vehicles, industry, and biomass use.

Vulnerability to climate change

- Coastal cities are under threats: hundreds of millions of people in urban areas across the world are likely to be affected by rising sea levels, increased precipitation, inland floods, more frequent and stronger cyclones and storms, and periods of more extreme heat and cold.
- Climate change may also negatively impact infrastructure and worsen access to basic urban services and quality of life in cities.

Population and vital infrastructure at risk

- Most of the vital economic and social infrastructure, government facilities, and assets are located in cities.
- The most affected populations are the urban poor who tend to live along river banks, on hillsides and slopes prone to landslides, near polluted grounds, in unstable structures vulnerable to earthquakes, and along waterfronts in coastal areas.



If properly planned, capacitated, and managed through the appropriate governance structures, cities can be places of innovation and efficiency.

Decision-makers engaged in cities have the potential to diminish the causes of climate change (mitigation)

and effectively protect themselves from its impacts (adaptation).

City leaders can become critical actors in addressing the global challenges of climate change.



Linking with Global Dialogues: Post-2015 Agenda and Climate Change

Habitat III will be the first UN global conference to be held after the adoption of the post-2015 sustainable development goals. It will largely focus on how to implement the urbanization dimension of sustainable development and, hopefully, a new climate change agreement. The New Urban Agenda must therefore resonate with the letter and spirit of the post-2015 sustainable development, the climate change discussion and the global social agenda.

To ensure this, UN-Habitat has participated in the work of the United Nations System Task Team (UNTT) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its Working Group on Indicators. UN-Habitat has also provided inputs on sustainable urbanization to the work of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. UN-Habitat has worked with Governments at the country level to explain the importance of sustainable urbanization in national development in the context

of discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs.

As you may recall, after more than one year of discussion and negotiation, the 13th and final session of the Open Working Group (OWG) adopted, by acclamation, a proposal on post-2015 sustainable development goals and targets on 19 July, which includes proposed sustainable development goal 11, which is entitled “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

Urbanization is a clear source of value, which is derived from the economies of location, the economies of efficiency and the economies of urbanization. This capacity to generate value is a very big source of potential growth for the national economy, coming with a relatively moderate investment cost. In that sense, it is highly productive to invest in urbanization because it will yield a high return in the national economy. A num-

ber of countries have already established urbanization as a development strategy. In the forthcoming of Financing for Development in Addis Ababa this July, urban productivity is expected to be one of the topics to be discussed.

UN-Habitat has also participated in the processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including at the nineteenth Conference of the Parties and the Climate Change Conference, held in Bonn, Germany, in June 2014. UN-Habitat was also involved in the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit, held in September 2014, where I co-led the “cities” work stream leading up to the Summit. These two events represented a great push forward as member states debate a new climate agreement which hopefully will be adopted in Paris next year.

Through the implementation of the Strategic Plan approved in the twenty-fourth session of the Governing



Council, UN-Habitat is strengthening its capacity to address strategic issues of urbanization in a more comprehensive manner. The way towards Habitat III is going to be a unique opportunity to increase the awareness and deepen the debate and knowledge about the capacity of urbanization to foster sustainable development. In other words, the capacity of urbanization to address the challenges of poverty, inequality, its contribution to addressing climate change, and also to advance more sustainable forms of consumption and production in the forthcoming years.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that, through the efforts that I have just outlined, and building on its own new strategic direction, UN-Habitat has promoted and continues to promote the recognition of the important contribution of urbanization to sustainable development, to addressing climate change, and to the global social agenda. It has also ensured that its contributions to the New Urban Agenda are aligned to the ideas emerging within current global dialogues, especially the post-2015 sustainable development goals and climate change processes.

To enhance this work, especially on the normative side, UN-Habitat needs the strong support of member States, in particular through increased non-earmarked contributions to the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. I would therefore like to invite all member States to review their financial contributions to UN-Habitat, with a view to increasing and stabilizing the organization's non-earmarked income.

I wish you very successful deliberations.

KEY LEVERS FOR ACHIEVING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

National Urban Policies



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National Urban Policy provides a coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long

term. NUP is a powerful lever which amalgamates the dispersed energy and potential of urban centres within a national system of cities and human settlements. NUP has helped guide the urbanization process by promoting more compact, socially inclusive, better connected and integrated cities and

territories that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change.

NUP process builds linkages between sectors, defines the broad parameters within which the transformative force of urbanization is activated and steered, coordinates the work of different tiers of government, establishes the incentives for more sustainable practices, and allocates resources accordingly. It also guides and circumvents uncontrolled rural-urban migration and overconcentration in a single megacity and ensures balanced development in smaller cities and market towns. Ultimately, NUP helps maximize the benefits of urbanization, while mitigating inequalities and potential adverse externalities.

Planned City Extension



Cities in the developing world need to be prepared so that they can avoid unplanned land occupation and steer urban development along a viable structure for guided growth. Sufficient urban land supply can mitigate land speculation and guarantee organized growth with enough common space reserved for public use. The planned

city extension approach addresses the pressure for affordable housing and accessible basic services resulting from fast growing urban populations. The approach is particularly relevant for intermediate cities which foresee high population growth rates, where people need to be relocated from non-viable areas, and in the event of disasters.

The city extension plans prepare land for development in advance and at the scale of expected population growth by identifying and structuring expansion areas adjacent to existing urban centres. Key features of these plans is that they are structured with a street and public spaces grid, the expansion land is located in proximity and well connected with the existing urban fabric and at an adequate scale, and the plans' development rules favour mixed land use, a lively street life and social mix. In addition, the planned extension areas should steer development away from fragile and at-risk areas. Planned city extensions are beneficial because they reduce the costs of service delivery and transport; minimize the city's ecological footprint; reduce pressure of development on environmentally-sensitive areas; and discourage speculative tendencies. They produce a large number of plots, thus keeping land prices down and, if combined with adequate rules and financial mechanisms, enable value sharing for the development of the public space and management.

Planned City Infills and Densification



Planned city infills and densification strategies are applied to existing urban fabric to improve existing patterns and help achieve a structure that minimizes transport and service delivery costs, optimizes the use of land and supports the protection and organization of open spaces. They can provide benefits in terms of street life, economic viability of activities, proximity and walkability. They also increase the offer of housing in the existing city.

Planned city infills complement planned city extensions, and are particularly appropriate for larger cities with inefficient land use patterns, such as low densities, functional segregation and inadequate connectivity. Examples of Planned City Infills include suburban densification, area redevelopment and slum upgrading, layout of new areas with higher densities, brownfield development, building conversions.

ASUD

The Achieving Sustainable Urban Development (ASUD) project is developing tools to assist cities to prepare for medium to long term projected urban growth in a sustainable manner. The principal focus is on city extension processes but pilot activities have also included city infills. The principal methodology includes a focus on good urban design for the phased implementation of foundational

planning elements, such as public space and connectivity, supported by realistic financial strategies that consider the full range of locally appropriate investment options. The design and financial elements are developed along with a legal analysis to ensure that individual projects are feasible in the short term and that they will be predictable over longer periods. ASUD's principal objectives are to provide a

framework for managed growth and, through this, unlock the local economic development potential of urbanisation. However, ASUD tools are also designed to promote inclusive outcomes at a variety of levels, including optimising the balance of public good benefits and private profits from urbanisation and maximising the shelter and economic opportunity outcomes for the poor.

Housing at the Centre

Global housing needs are growing quickly with the current pace of urbanisation. A billion new houses will be needed by 2025 to accommodate 50 million new urban dwellers per year; costs are estimated at USD 650 billion per year, or USD 9 to USD 11 trillion by 2025 (McKinsey, 2014).

The global deficit is exacerbated by the increasing number of slums worldwide with about 860 million urban dwellers

living in slum and inadequate housing conditions. This chronic housing deficit demonstrates the inability to integrate adequate housing strategies into urban policies, even if residential land occupies between 65 and 75 percent of urban areas. Deficient planning and weak regulation have left little room for governments to maneuver against urban sprawl, spatial and social segregation, weakening of social cohesion and worsening inequalities.

The 'Housing at the Centre' approach reflects the come-back of housing as a priority in the development agenda, addressing the needs of the poorest, repositioning housing at the centre of national urban policies and at the (physical) centre of cities; the latter in reference to the need for housing to be in well-located areas and linked to livelihood opportunities.

Rebuild by Design

Rapid, unplanned urbanization--particularly in developing countries and fragile states--is exacerbating people's vulnerability to hazards and creating new layers of risk. Current urban development patterns are contributing to slum growth and inequitable standards of living through socially and economically segregated urban spaces and sprawl, and increasing people's vulnerability to other shocks and stresses. Good urbanization practices, planning, and design and appropriate humanitarian initiatives focused on durable and sustainable

approaches can help to narrow the gap between humanitarian and development interventions, offering solutions to 'build back better'.

The City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP) is one of several projects of UN-Habitat to make cities safer places through the implementation of strategic programmes that target specific indicators of resilience to multi-hazard catastrophic events. It includes a comprehensive tool to equip urban leaders, planners and developers with information they need

to calibrate and measure their resilience in order to make informed governance and investment decisions. It helps mobilize transformative, sustainable improvements of cities to safeguard against multiple hazards and ensure continuity of urban processes and services. It also empowers cities to 'do more with what they have' and catalyze new finance opportunities by promoting resilience as a criterion for investment. Finally, it encourages resilient urban planning and design practices to help cities recover more quickly and 'bounce back better' from crises.

Key ingredients to good urban planning

Based on empirical data and experience in the field, UN-Habitat has identified five principles to foster the development of sustainable neighbourhoods:



Dakar, Senegal. © 2013 DigitalGlobe

- An adequate amount of street and other public space (30 per cent of the urban land devoted to streets and 15 to 20 per cent to other public spaces);
 - A population density of 150 people per hectare at least;
 - A mixed use pattern with 40 per cent of floor space allocated to commercial uses;
 - A diversity of tenure types and housing typologies in order to promote social mix, with 20 to 50 per cent of residential space for low income or affordable housing;
 - Good transport connectivity, with intersections and multiple accesses.
- Such principles, if applied and supported by good design, rules and regulation and financial mechanisms can ensure productive and livable cities for all as they set the scene for efficient economy, reduce impact on the environment and consumption of resources, support social integration, create opportunities and produce the economies of scale that enable service delivery and viable municipal finance.

Urban decision makers should know that....

Urban interventions through city extensions generate commensurate value and benefits to all:

In Cairo, Egypt, the central government transferred 694 million square meters of desert to the New Urban Communities Authorities (NUCA) to accommodate expected urbanization needs. NUCA auctioned off the plots with basic infrastructure services for US 3.12 billion, more than recovering the cost of infrastructure investment which was used to build a highway connecting the new city to the Cairo ring road. Not only the initial investment has allowed people to settle in newly designed neighborhoods but this has helped them to be better connected to the main city, to access jobs and increase their livelihoods.

Mobilizing citizens to invest in common urban goods and improve infrastructure – including streets, bridges and drainage, generates value for everyone and improves quality of life:

In Bogota, Colombia, valorization through a city-wide betterment levy which has financed more than USD 1 billion of public works, including 217 streets, bridges and drainage improvements. This tax took into account citizens' ability to pay over five years. This approach gained public acceptance given the positive results on everyone's lives.

Introducing spatial planning tools to leverage local tax can lead to benefits that are also largely accepted by communities, if well managed:

Spatial planning tools used in Hargeisa, Somalia, have enabled the local government to multiply the level of tax collections by three. As a result, 40 new roads and eight markets have been built.

Public space is a vital component of successful cities. Well designed and managed public spaces are a key asset for a city and have a positive impact on its economy:

In London, business turn over in a high street location increases by between 5 to 15 percent following investment in a nearby public space; a 1 percent increase of between 0,3 to 0,5 percent in average house price.

Improving the quality of streets brings significant environment benefits:

In environmental terms, a 10 percent improvement in a street's walking quality could yield a reduction of 15 kg of CO₂ per household per year as reliance on cars could be reduced.



Kibera slum, Nairobi. © Aleksandar Todorovic/Shutterstock

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