



PANEL ON URBAN ECOLOGY AND RESILIENCE¹
(Policy Unit 8)

HABITAT III OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS
WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL 2016, CONFERENCE ROOM 3

3 P.M. – 4 P.M.

Introduction

Sharon Gil, Programme Officer, UNEP-DTIE
Sundaa Bridgett-Jones, Rockefeller Foundation

Moderator

Martina Otto, UNEP

Panelists

- Sylvanus Kofi Adzornu, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Environment, Ghana
- Marta Aguilar, National Director of Land Strategic Planning, under Secretariat of Territorial Planning of Public Investment, Argentina
- David Dodman, Director, Human Settlements Group, International Institute for Environment and Development, UK
- Alessandra Fidanza, Italian Registered Architect and Urban Planner, Italy
- Maryam Hariri, Vice President Ogilvy, Earth and Social Change group, Senior Risk and Resiliency Advisor at Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Adjunct Prof, NYU (Environmental and Food Studies Departments)
- Taufique Hossain, Deputy Director, Urban Development Directorate, Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Bangladesh

There is a need to change the way we think of cities. The city is primarily perceived as a significant source of negative ecological impacts. The second challenge identified in discussions is the need to review and revise the way we live in, design, and manage our cities. Shocks and stresses affecting cities now and in the future, pose significant threats to humans and ecosystems.

VISION

By 2050 there will be about 9.7 billion people sharing the earth's resources, 66% of whom are expected to live in urban areas (UNDESA 2014; 2015). With this growth in urban population and expansion of cities, the relationship between human settlements and ecosystems is increasingly vital, both in terms of environmental sustainability and vulnerability to shocks and stresses. This paper explores the challenge of managing both environmental and human well-being in this context, and the critical role of cities in meeting this challenge.

¹Information Habitat III Policy Unit 8 and its Policy Paper is available at
www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/policy



PRIORITY POLICY OPTIONS/KEY MESSAGES

The interpretation of these key messages must take into consideration different contexts and local conditions:

- Urban environmental sustainability and resilience should feature prominently in the New Urban Agenda.
- Cities, when built and governed well, can be catalysts of environmental sustainability.
- Effective and inclusive governance of resources and ecosystems is critical to resilience.
- Human health and natural systems are intertwined.
- Built environment investments have to be made with environmental sustainability and resilience in mind.
- Nature-based infrastructure is key for reducing vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of cities.
- Effective use of soft systems and design are important processes for building resilience

RECOMMENDATIONS

City systems must be transformed to encourage healthy, sustainable life and enable the development of communities that can adapt to and prepare for existing/potential shocks and stresses. Policies should push for a significant change in physical outcomes and can be catalysts of a broader policy process:

- *Outcome-related policy recommendations on urban ecology and resilience: Optimize urban subsystems and human health:* Effective management for urban environmental sustainability and resilience potentially provides multiple benefits including economic development, more attractive and liveable urban landscapes, and increased human well-being.
- *Shift urban patterns of consumption and production to become more sustainable:* Use appropriate technology and encourage open use of databases to gather, organize, and manage information on consumption that is critical for developing policies to shift consumption patterns. Design locally relevant interventions. Ensure that sources of critical resources which are part of a city's basic services and daily consumption (e.g. clean water, food) are secure and protected by policy. Strengthen the connectivity between urban and rural areas to address production issues.
- *Enhance system resilience to physical, economic and social shocks and stresses:* Strengthened resilience of city systems enables survival, adaptation and growth in the face of disturbance. Specific recommended policy actions include; Ensuring that the city infrastructure and framework are resilient, investing in "soft" measures, like stronger coordination among diverse actors, development of social capital, or incentives to change norms and behaviours that can contribute to resilience building, developing a thorough and detailed understanding of disaster risk in all dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of people and assets, hazard characteristics and environment, and protecting and creating place-specific physical attributes that enhance capacity for adaptation.



- *Cross-Cutting Policy Recommendations:*
 - *Interdependent governance.* Local policies should both inform and implement regional, national and global policy.
 - *Local participation and inclusion.* The inter-dependent nature of urban subsystems places an important responsibility on local governments to guide and manage local activities.
 - *Knowledge and capacity.* Policies should build knowledge and maximize utility.
 - *Design integration;* improved urban design, where 'design' is understood to be a *process and a set of techniques* to deal with issues in a holistic and integrated way. It also offers a medium to achieve greater outreach to small communities where action can take place.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The implementation framework has three pillars: institutional context, financial mechanisms, and monitoring systems. They are complementary and closely linked, enabling the paradigm shift that is needed to change the way our cities are built and governed.

- *Establish an enabling institutional context.* Governments have the responsibility and the legal capacity to establish and strengthen the framework within which different actors operate and interact.
- *Funding and financing urban ecology and resilience.* One key strategy for financing is to explicitly include funding for urban ecology and resilience measures in the investment and maintenance budgets of urban areas.
- *Effective monitoring systems and ambitious targets.* Identify and adopt effective measures to monitor performance and track progress.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

FOR PANEL ON URBAN ECOLOGY AND RESILIENCE

1. Which of these key messages and policy recommendations do you find the most relevant to your own context?
2. What do you see as the most pressing sustainability and resilience challenges currently facing your cities?
3. How do you see these concepts of sustainability and resilience as helping to address other issues you may face such as inequality, security, social cohesion, etc?