



## Dialogue on The Shape of Cities: Urban Planning and Management

Thursday 22 June 2006

Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre Ballroom C

### Sustainable urban development

- This Dialogue will build upon the contributions of the World Planners' Congress that will immediately precede the World Urban Forum. The Congress will develop a Declaration on "new" planning and it is intended that this will be refined during other events at the Forum culminating in the emergence of an action plan at the Dialogue.
- The dialogue will also discuss whether urban planning is equally relevant in both developing and developed countries and whether it is relevant in dealing with issues of social, economic as well as environmental sustainability; whether urban planning problems are due to shortcomings inherent in the approach being applied making it costly to undertake and implement.
- Some of the key objectives of the dialogue will be to reach agreement on priorities for sustainability and discuss how urban planning can mitigate disasters and contribute to safer cities.

### Background

Sustainability is the new watchword of urban development. Many city managers and other stakeholders are drawing inspiration from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, and seeking to maximize environmental as well as social and economic development. However, there are significant differences in opinion about what are the most important priorities for sustainability.

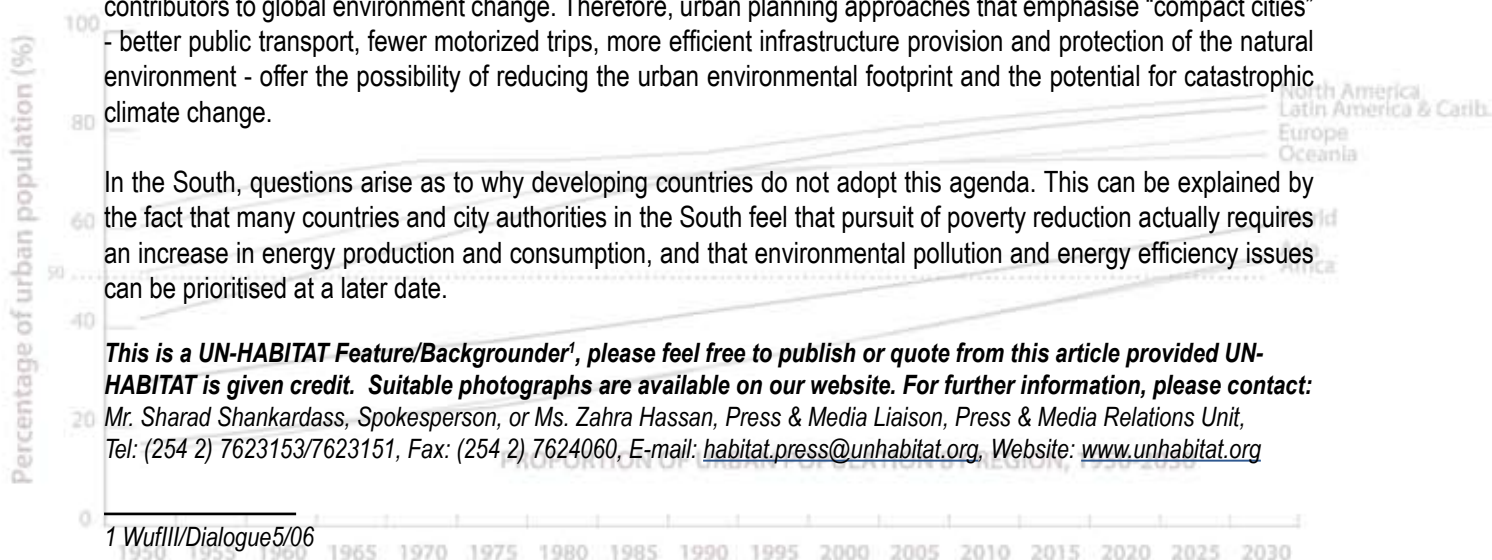
Global environmental change is seen as the overarching threat to sustainability in developed countries and there is a growing demand to limit consumption as a means of avoiding ecological overload. In contrast, poverty is the most immediate concern in developing countries - reducing consumption is regarded as a problem many of them would like to have!

So what should city managers do to deal with these challenges? In the North, a major cause of over-consumption is inefficiently planned cities. Suburban sprawl which requires high levels of car ownership, over-extended infrastructure, massive per capita energy consumption and depletion of biodiversity and tree cover are all major contributors to global environment change. Therefore, urban planning approaches that emphasise "compact cities" - better public transport, fewer motorized trips, more efficient infrastructure provision and protection of the natural environment - offer the possibility of reducing the urban environmental footprint and the potential for catastrophic climate change.

In the South, questions arise as to why developing countries do not adopt this agenda. This can be explained by the fact that many countries and city authorities in the South feel that pursuit of poverty reduction actually requires an increase in energy production and consumption, and that environmental pollution and energy efficiency issues can be prioritised at a later date.

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<sup>1</sup> WufIII/Dialogue5/06



### **Urban Planning in Dar es Salaam: A paradigm shift**

By 1989, the ten-year-old Master Plan of the City of Dar es Salaam had become obsolete. Most of the assumptions underlying the plan were no longer valid in the light of the social, economic and policy changes, which had been going on in Tanzania since the preparation of the Master Plan.

The city's social and physical infrastructure had deteriorated very badly. The Master Plan had not worked. A change was therefore needed to prepare a plan that would work and remain sustainably relevant.

The introduction of the Environmental Planning and Management process in the Sustainable Dar es Salaam Project (SDP) marked the beginning of a new planning approach. The Environmental Planning and Management process led to building collaborative bridges between different stakeholders in the public, private and popular sectors, as well as within institutions and communities. The collaboration promotes the sharing of knowledge and capacity building among stakeholders.

More important, stakeholders have the opportunity to genuinely participate in decision-making, the planning and implementation of self-improvement initiatives. The process resulted in empowerment of the communities, building of social trust among the stakeholders and a Strategic Urban Development Plan prepared through a consultative process.

The SUDP documents the shared vision of the City of Dar es Salaam, outlines the strategic development issues, proposals for environmentally sustainable development including urban renewal projects, and the methodology of its preparation.

In the preparatory process all stakeholders were engaged and committed to the output. But the fact that the SUDP has yet to be adopted as the legal replacement of the Master Plan is probably a weakness to be recognized. It has, however, been guiding the development of the City of Dar es Salaam with a difference and has been achieving results.

*Source: UN-HABITAT*

### **Improving Urban Planning and Monitoring in the City of Aleppo**

In Syria, the planning process has traditionally been guided by central planning authorities reinforcing hierarchical procedures for reporting and approval for projects. The country's approach to urban management, which has consisted of comprehensive master plans and regulations aimed at directing growth and organizing service delivery at a macro-scale, does not allow flexibility for municipalities to decide on a wide range of functions. Most municipalities also lack the capacity to deal with the considerable overloads in their daily activities.

However, recently a number of municipalities have been able to overcome some of these challenges. The renowned old city of Aleppo, famous for its history and monuments, is a good case in point. The municipality has been able to introduce a new set of codes and regulations in order to improve its built environment and the living conditions of its residents. The municipality has also initiated a decentralized system of monitoring urban space, dividing the city into nine sectors, each with its own monitoring unit and maintenance group. This has allowed a closer relation between the municipality and residents, in addition to improving the city's urban management scheme. In this regard, the municipality has set up its own "Local Urban Observatory" as a focal point for developing an information network to support planning decisions. The observatory is helping the city to collect data in order to create a more accurate profile of the current urban situation, to identify major challenges and areas of intervention, and track progress towards sustainable urban development.

The city of Aleppo has also implemented an upgrading scheme for its old city core that has given it widespread visibility and recognition for its planning practices. The new planning scheme, which aims to upgrade the historic core of the city and preserving its architectural heritage, conceived of this task within a broader structure of urban management, including land use regulation, housing, technical infrastructure, traffic, and others. Through an action areas approach, the project engaged various local stakeholders such as nongovernmental organizations, citizen groups, and other state agencies and was hence able to extend its partnership network even broader. The project led to substantial improvements in the living conditions of the old city's inhabitants and at reducing neighbourhood degradation. This plan provided an important departure from earlier centralized master planning experiences towards a more flexible development plan in priority action areas. The municipality has also been able to involve several stakeholders and generate innovative partnership with local and international actors that allowed it to compensate for lack of know-how as well as the scarcity of its resources.

*Source: ESCWA 2001, UN-HABITAT 2004.*