

World Urban Forum 5

“The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide”
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 22-26 March 2010

AIDE-MEMOIRE

Urban Researchers Roundtable: “*Bridging the Urban Transport Divide*”, 24 March 2010, 4.30pm-7pm

Introduction: *Contemporary global challenges of urban mobility*

Effective transportation networks are fundamental for the functioning of cities and towns across the globe and a precondition for economic prosperity and the wellbeing of their residents. At the same time, the economic and social benefits of mobility are frequently accompanied by negative side effects such as congestion, social exclusion, accidents, air pollution and energy consumption.

Since the mid-20th century, the negative side effects of urban transportation have particularly become apparent in the metropolitan areas of developed countries. Rising car traffic volumes and congestion are increasingly causing lost economic productivity, environmental degradation and affect overall quality of life in cities. With the documented contribution of the urban transport sector to global greenhouse gas emissions, there is a heightened level of urgency to apply new approaches and technologies for mobility in urban areas of developed countries.

Developing countries are increasingly facing similar challenges due to rapid urbanization and motorization in recent decades in combination with insufficient investment in transport infrastructure, often accompanied by urban poverty and social exclusion. While vehicle ownership rates in most developing nations are still low in comparison to wealthy countries, motorization is rising rapidly and is creating major challenges in the expanding “megacities” of the South. Although still only 10 to 20 percent of urban residents own and operate a private automobile, cities in developing countries are already facing stifling traffic congestion and worsening air pollution. The annual increase in the motorization rate of many developing countries has approached 10 percent, which is substantially higher than ever experienced in industrialized countries. As a result, energy use by the transportation sector in developing countries has been increasing at over four percent annually over the past 20 years, far exceeding the global 2.7 percent rate of increase.

Consequently, a major challenge for cities all over the world in the 21st century is to meet the mobility needs of their residents in a socially inclusive, economically efficient and environmentally sustainable manner. At the same time, the provision of adequate, efficient and safe transport infrastructure and services in urban areas is frequently constrained by a complex set of financial, institutional, environmental and political factors. Frequently, the barriers are not necessarily financial or technical in nature, but arise from political, social and institutional factors preventing progress towards sustainability in the urban transport field.

As a result, severe disadvantages can be observed in terms of the accessibility and affordability of transport infrastructure and services for different societal groups and ultimately in terms of urban mobility. Inequity due to unequal access to mobility opportunities and therefore employment opportunities, housing and basic services represents ‘the urban transport divide’ and is the focus of the Urban Researchers Roundtable.

The Urban Researchers Roundtable: Focus and expected outcomes

The Urban Researchers Roundtable, will be held in the context of the Fifth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 5) which has “The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide” as its theme. The Roundtable will provide a forum for urban researchers to share experiences and innovative solutions for addressing the policy challenges related to bridging the urban transport divide in the World’s Cities. At the center of the discussion will be the current state of the urban transport divide in both developing and developed countries and effective practices and policies to bridge this gap.

The urban transport divide is conceptualised in terms of the following three pillars of sustainability:

- The social divide: the unequal access to mobility for different groups and locations in urban areas.
- The environmental divide: the positive and negative implications of urban transport for global climate and health in cities are unevenly distributed across neighbourhoods, cities and countries.
- The economic divide: the benefits of efficient transportation systems for employment opportunities and poverty reduction are unevenly distributed spatially and socially.

The discussion will explore how models and approaches that have successfully overcome the urban transport divide can be transferred and applied widely.

For UN-Habitat, the World Urban Forum is a key outreach event. The outcomes of the Urban Researchers Roundtable will inform UN-Habitat’s ongoing work in urban transport and the preparation of the 2013 Global Report on Human Settlements, which will focus on ‘Sustainable Urban Transport’.

The discussion and outcomes of the Roundtable will be made available to the public through a summary report.

Organization of the Urban Researchers Roundtable

As input to the discussion, 5 leading researchers from different regions will give short presentations on the urban transport divide and related policy responses. This will be followed by a discussion of the key challenges, innovative practices and policies to move towards sustainable urban transport and mobility. Beyond the five formal presentations, practitioners and policy makers will be able to share their experiences and learn about sustainable urban transport policies and practices. In preparation for the Roundtable, an electronic dialogue was held among prospective participants in late 2009 with several contributors highlighting the importance of bridging the “urban transport divide” in the world’s cities.

The Roundtable will be structured as follows:

4.30 pm	Video curtain raiser on transport	
4.35 pm	Welcome	Prof. Oyebanji Oyeyinka, UN-HABITAT
		Mr. Jerome Pourbaix, International Association of Public Transport (UITP)
	Opening remarks	Prof. Leila Christina Dias, Brazilian Association of Postgraduate Programmes and Research in Urban and Regional Planning, Brazil
4.45 pm	A system wide and integrated approach to urban transport policy	Prof. Eduardo Vasconcellos, National Association of Public Transportation, Brazil

4.55 pm	The challenges of sustainable urban transport in North America and Europe	Mr. Michael Replogle, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, U.S.
5.05 pm	Improving informal public transport systems	Prof. Peter Wilkinson, University of Cape Town, South Africa
5.15 pm	Non-motorized urban transport options in Asia	Ms. Maria Renny Herdanti, Institute for Transportation Studies, Indonesia
5.25 pm	Urban poverty and mobility in the context of West-Africa	Mr. Xavier Godard, Advisor, Cooperation for Urban Mobility in the Developing world (CODATU)
5.35 pm	Discussion	-
6.40 pm	Concluding remarks	Mr. Jerome Pourbaix, International Association of Public Transport
	Closing remarks	Prof. Fabio Duarte, Catholic Pontifical University of Curitiba, Brazil
		Dr. Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza, UN-HABITAT
7.00 pm	End	Prof. Oyebanji Oyeyinka, UN-HABITAT

Venue

The Urban Research Roundtable will be held on Wednesday, 24 March 2010 from 4.30 pm to 7.00 pm at WUF 5 Conference Venue, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. English/Portuguese interpretation will be available.

Contacts

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Registration is free and participation is only limited by room capacity.

Partners

- Associação Nacional dos Transportes Públicos/ National Association of Public Transportation - Brazil (ANTP)
- L'Union Internationale des Transports Publics/ International Union of Public Transport (UITP)
- Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Planejamento Urbano e Regional/Brazilian Association of Postgraduate Programmes and Research in Urban and Regional Planning (ANPUR)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)