World Urban Forum 2010

UN-HABITAT Universities Round Table Report

Rio de Janeiro 24 March 2010

"The key challenges for universities in promoting urban sustainability"

Organization

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UN-HABITAT Universities Round Table Report

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Executive Summary

Background:

The world has urbanised. Over half of the world's population now live in urban areas and 90 per cent of the growth is occurring in the developing world, with 70 per cent of the world's population forecast to live in urban areas by 2050. The UN Millennium Development Goals provide benchmarks for progress on poverty which is a fundamental urban issue.

We face a number of global urban challenges including:

(1) Challenges to global environmental sustainability, including climate change and its implications for energy use, sustainable food and provision of fresh water

(2) The impacts of rapid urbanisation on biodiversity, natural resources and physical infrastructure

(3) The demographic challenges of rapid urbanisation, migration and changing population profiles

(4) The challenges associated with formal and informal economies of urban areas, feeding urban populations and the urbanisation of poverty, manifested in the increasing number of slum dwellers

(5) Increasing socio-spatial challenges associated with the scale of urban areas

(6) Institutional challenges relating to local and regional governance and the meaningful participation and effective representation of civil society.

Over the last few decades the world has seen a dramatic increase in the number of universities and tertiary institutions addressing urban challenges. The majority of the world's universities are located in or close to cities and urban areas and engage in teaching, research and improving the accessibility of knowledge to and from the wider community. They create new knowledge and enhance understanding and help educate and train the next generation of urban practitioners in a range of disciplines. There is a recognised need by universities of the need to work collaboratively with all sectors to achieve workable solutions to urban sustainability and this involves inter disciplinarity. Most universities face major challenges in ensuring that:

- Their curricula are responding to the issues of urban sustainability
- The research is responding to the priority of sustainable urbanisation and generating ideas to meet the challenges
- The knowledge and understanding generated in universities are made accessible to policy makers, practitioners and communities through proactive outreach services, ventures and partnerships.

UN-HABITAT is committed to the Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanisation. The Sustainable Development Network (SUD-Net) established by UN-HABITAT consolidates existing initiatives and is designed to assist urban players to access up

to date information and knowledge and make better choices. The HABITAT Partner University Network is an emerging network created to support this process.

Introduction and opening remarks

Delegates were welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor of Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Prof Roberto Salles.

It was noted that universities are almost entirely located within or near cities.

Co-Chairs proceeded to set up urban sustainability as a subject of debate regarding research, education, institutional cooperation and knowledge management, starting with definitions for establishing common grounds for the discussion.

A notion of sustainability was framed as an encompassing problem involving a number of dimensions, such as:

1. *A social and political problem*
2. *An environmental problem*
3. *An economic problem*
4. *A spatial problem*
5. *A problem of reproduction*

It was emphasised that these dimensions were inter-related, and that, while acknowledging their complexity and potential contradictions, the debate on Sustainable Urban Development should aim at finding potential convergences as paths for university actions and propositions.

Aims and Objectives of the Round Table

Objectives of the Roundtable:

1. To discuss the opportunities and challenges for universities in advancing sustainable urban development through teaching, research and fieldwork, and bridging research, policy and implementation gaps.

2. To establish a broad set of ideas, propositions and principles that underpin the efforts and strategies universities use in their role in advancing sustainable urban development.

UN-HABITAT comments

It was noted that the majority of research on urban sustainability is focused on how to retrofit existing urban infrastructure, with a lack of attention given to how to sustainably accommodate the 3-6 billion new urban residents there will be in the next generation, mostly outside the OECD, recognizing this as the “mega-challenge of

demography". It was observed that universities need to train the decision-makers of tomorrow to understand, propose and develop solutions for this challenge. In this sense, universities also need to consider the following issues:

1. *Distribution of human resources*
   Human resources (especially with Sustainable Urban Development expertise) are still scarce, and unevenly distributed (e.g. the number of architects in the whole of Africa is the same as that in Italy, and mostly concentrated in Egypt and South Africa).

2. *Advancing education*
   University education is still quite conventional, whereas it needs to be flexible and firmly related to urgent sustainability issues and to new knowledge and Sustainable Urban Development strategies, as well as more explicitly connected to local contexts and their problems.

3. *Roles of the city*
   Universities need to support local authorities to ensure cities fulfil their roles in expressing and supporting a more sustainable society successfully.

As partner universities show that they are contributing to UN-HABITAT's agenda, UN-HABITAT can help in reasserting the role of universities in their social contexts, in bridging propositions and actions, and in enhancing cooperation and exchange of knowledge and effective experiences.

Summary of Part 1

Co-Chairs invited participants to contribute in a two-stage process: (i) bringing ideas and reflections based on their experiences and general conceptions; and (ii) exploring how these ideas could evolve into *actions* in order to support other universities' practices and agendas in Sustainable Urban Development.

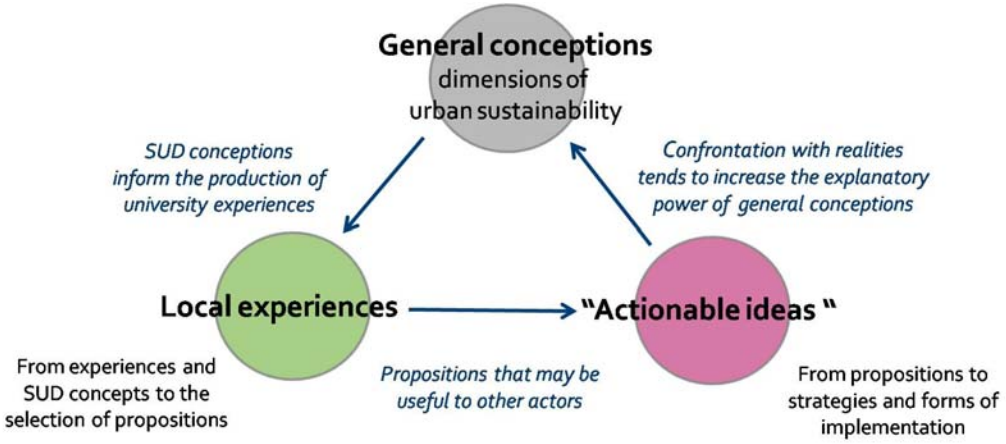

Figure 1 – Going beyond sets of intentions: from general conceptions to propositions based on local experiences, towards actionable ideas, systematic approaches and potential implementation of solutions, against the backdrop of distinct urban realities.

Summary of Part 2

Themes for discussion

Members were asked to contribute to developing agendas in education, research, knowledge management and institutional co-operation. Under each of these agendas a question was posed for consideration by participants:

Education – *What are the most effective ways of teaching urban sustainability?*

Research – *What are the areas of knowledge we need to advance in urban sustainability?*

Knowledge management – *How can universities share their knowledge?*

Institutional cooperation – *How can universities relate more to their social, environmental and material environment?*

Representatives of 65 Universities registered for the Roundtable, 23 of whom submitted detailed responses to the questions raised on the registration form. A total of 209 participants from 109 Universities attended the round table from Africa (10), Asia (8), the Caribbean (1), Europe (25), Latin America (incl Mexico) (45, 38 of which were from Brazil), 17 from the United States and Canada and from the Pacific (3).

During the Roundtable session 38 oral contributions were made from 34 Universities including representatives from South and North America, the Caribbean, Pacific, Australasia, Asia and Europe.

Not all universities making oral contributions were able to be identified. Those identified are listed in the appendix in the order contributions were made.

Notes on the contributions of participants

Firstly, a number of contributors focused their comments and recommendations on institutional aspects of universities as institutions whose activities and roles transcend the four themes for discussion.

In addition, it was broadly observed that universities must ensure autonomy in their role of thinking and proposing urban solutions.

The *ethics and values in the education of future professionals and in the role of universities* were strongly emphasised. This emphasis would aim to stimulate education about urban sustainability that sheds light on complexities, contradictions and relations between different facets of urban sustainability and within stronger concepts of sustainability.

Institutional arrangements around academic performance mean that some universities currently value research more highly than teaching, with service and outreach activities valued least. University performance measures need to value service and outreach more highly.

A further point made was that universities need to move from considering themselves as isolated sources of knowledge to *working with other institutions, communities and policy makers in the co-production and use of knowledge*.

Contributions can be integrated under the four themes, as follows:

Education

The role of universities as educators was discussed under three broad areas; *who* are our target students, *what* and *how* to teach to promote urban sustainability and the right to the city. Attention was given to the social dimension of urban sustainability and *the right to the city*: strategies of urban development and planning geared to ensure urban justice; responsibility to work for and with those with least power.

On the topic of *who* universities should be teaching, there was an identified need for universities to provide appropriate teaching to foster socially skilled, politically-oriented actors and urban decision makers of the future. Integral to this endeavour was raising awareness of their social, political and institutional environment including the balance of power in city development and the political arrangements that shape the future of urban development. It was pointed out that we should stimulate professionals to help guide governmental and non-governmental decisions and actions, understand political processes linked to unsustainable decisions and the potential need to counterbalance processes and ensure that voices are heard through means like participatory planning.

In response to concerns that universities teach the elite, a political function of universities was identified to create fairer cities. This educational role includes fostering human capabilities, taking students from different backgrounds and fostering inclusive practices in the access to education as a means to increase social sustainability.

The Roundtable addressed the relations of universities to the plethora of social actors and their contexts. It was noted both that the private sector was still largely disconnected from universities (regarding issues such as research and practice-oriented learning), and that we need to be reaching the "barefoot practitioners" who are building part of the infrastructure in the rapidly urbanising cities of the global south. Universities should steer attention to public policies geared to create proper conditions for architects, planners and others bring professional support closer to local communities.

Furthermore, The importance of educating architects with forms of knowledge and practice beyond the reproduction of isolated 'best practices', towards broader strategies and means of implementing a multi-dimensional conception of urban sustainability was also observed.

It was further pointed out that in many developing countries, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa the number of urban professionals was very low and the question was raised how universities could contribute to increasing this number.

On the question of *how* universities should be fostering *the right to the city*, the importance of stimulating *reflexive practices* was suggested: educating future professionals who are able to address urban problems with a critical view, and who understand urban sustainability in a broad sense, while they are actively involved in practices and aware of the central role of cities and their spatialities and the diversity of actors in the planning process.

A strong theme of the Roundtable on Education was that of *practice-based learning* (life projects, concrete knowledge, learning in the field), with emphases on connections between the universities' production of theories and the need to bring students closer to actual urban problems and empirical challenges.

Suggestions were made regarding an education anchored in the local, focusing on the need for students to be exposed to real contexts and the particularities of *context*, along with the need to render *connections to planning challenges* and practices in actual urban settings more explicit. Many contributions emphasised the relation to

local urban environments as "laboratories" for learning and the development of propositions, and culturally sensitive design.

Some participants addressed the challenge of building *relationships with local contexts (communities, governments, organisations)* through institutional arrangements and university-community frameworks, so that students acquire networking skills to engage these relationships in their long-term practice. Not only do students need to be involved in relationships with local contexts and governments, but also need to be prepared to involve communities in planning. These observations addressed the possibility of increasing links between universities and local activities.

It was suggested that the subject of practice-based learning needs to be extended, by changing the existing paradigm of undergraduate-postgraduate-doctoral learning to one of learner/practitioner, combining theory and local practice from early on, as a balance between instrumental and academic. This observation was coupled with an observation of the problem of the continuing education of professionals.

It was also suggested that students should be exposed to urban practices and experiences carried on in other regional contexts which could be taken home (for example, providing opportunities for student projects in cities outside students' countries of origin).

Methods or *how* universities should be teaching included ideas about interdisciplinarity, particularly courses at the interface between disciplines. More teaching was called for about methodologies, including more rigorous methods of urban analysis, connecting the local with the global through systemic approaches.

It was also pointed out the need to bridge research and post graduation production to undergraduate learning on urban reality and alternative means to advance Sustainable Urban Development.

Distance learning and short courses were considered useful for reaching practitioners in the field, who rarely have conditions of taking enough time off work to undertake even part time study.

Regarding teaching methods and sustainable urban design, participants called for the need to prepare architects and planners to deal with different scales and complexities of urban interventions.

Other recommended methods for teaching were the systematic use of *counterfactual planning scenarios, anticipating urban development*: teaching theories and methods able to address the complexities of urban growth (expansion, densification), the critical nature and change of spatial patterns, and the performance of cities and their distinct areas.

Reassertions were made of our roles in preparing professionals able to understand urban realities, and potential contradictions and convergences between different dimensions of sustainability as they meet in the urban, as well as the need of future professionals who are able to define priorities based on rigorous methods, theories and practices.

Finally, the need to *reshape curricula* and "think out of the box": rethink and propose new educational contents and courses better suited to the challenges of urban sustainability, based on systematic and systemic approaches to Sustainable Urban Development as a complex problem and its dimensions (social, economic, environmental, spatial, technical and so on), and drawing from different disciplines related to the urban context.

Thinking out of the box was in particular required to overcome the constraints that accreditation, often embedded in national legislation, imposed on curricula renewal. It was pointed out that the inertia associated with curriculum modernization widened the gap between cutting-edge research and education.

Research

Contributors spoke of constraints and drivers of research within universities and identified topics of high research need. A major item of concern noted was the constrained resources for research which have progressively led to *corporate demand-led research* rather than research for public good, and that this balance needs to be readdressed if universities are to contribute significantly to fairer and sustainable cities research.

A number of contributors addressed the need to balance *empirical with applied research*, and address the tension between growing specialization and the sense of cohesion when understanding problems, contexts, urban realities or urban sustainability as wholes or interrelated phenomena. The importance of research that spans disciplines was also brought to the Roundtable. While it was considered important that good empirical evidence was produced, there was concern that much highly specialised research being undertaken was never read.

On the other hand, many contributors stressed the *importance of field-based research*, the need for systematic research and its connection with fieldwork using real local problems, and also *integrative research* – i.e. research that brings practices together in concrete outputs that are useful to end users in policy and practice.

A particular contribution was made about *research agendas in developing countries which are often framed by external agencies* (international funders and researchers from developed countries), with little input from local universities.

Many contributors made reference to specific topics for research and areas where knowledge must be advanced. These included the following suggestions:

Research key themes

- *Urban justice and the right to the city*: approaches able to tackle spatial inequalities, underdeveloped areas and poor settlements; challenges of solving informality problems and urbanization deficit, increasing reconnections of segregated areas, relations between spatially and socially uneven areas; qualities and vulnerabilities of the unplanned city;

- *Management of natural resources* and approaches to cities as resource-hungry and externality-producing phenomena;

- Advance our *understanding of the city*: urban growth and new spatial patterns; the impact of urban morphology, changing densities, and urban sprawl; the performance of cities and urban structures regarding the different dimensions of urban sustainability; unsustainable urban form; and how we can increase urban density in sprawling cities while maintaining social wellbeing;

- More powerful models for simulating the consequences of urban development choices with good predictive validity that allow better understanding of resulting spatial patterns;

- Monitoring and evaluating the consequences and outcomes of urban and regional interventions and large projects;

- Emphasis on studies of *urban sustainable performances* of architectural typologies, as opposed to market solutions increasingly based on inefficient solutions and the sheer replication of foreign propositions, frequently implying spatial segregation in their actual urban contexts;

- Global youth growing demographic, 85% of whom live in Asia, Latin America and Africa, and simultaneous tendencies of an increasingly ageing population in other regions and their impacts on public support systems.

Knowledge Management

Several participants addressed the need for a *global electronic repository for information* about courses as well as a repository and *dissemination for actionable knowledge.* This repository needs to balance knowledge about generalised principles with context specific knowledge.

Related to this was a need to integrate existing knowledge fields, and synthesise and critically reflecting on this challenge.

How we communicate knowledge generated in academic institutions was also identified as important by several delegates, including the need for communicating complex subjects with extramural organisations, such as those in governance.

Knowledge Management key themes

- Need for integration *education-research-practical implementation*; developing research with community-based organisations and others;

- Need to increase relations between *post graduate and undergraduate education*: bringing new knowledge to undergraduate students;

- *Need to integrate existing knowledge on Sustainable Urban Development:* creating unified database systems for theses and research projects and outputs.

Institutional Cooperation

It was clear from contributions about practice-based learning that our ability to undertake such education requires much closer working relationships with workplaces and local government. This emerged a number of times in contributions, and included cooperation and shared learning to improve the capacity of local government around the cross-boundary issues of Sustainable Urban Development.

Researchers from developed countries undertaking research in developing countries should also be contributing to mutual *capacity-building* for local universities / academic institutions.

There is a need for universities to work with professional accreditation bodies to address the tension between training for good practice and professional accreditation (which is often static and inflexible).

The fact that poor settlements are not profitable for professionals to work in means that it may be a responsibility of universities to assist with cooperating to improve university-local government partnerships on developing urban solutions for poor settlements.

It was further expressed that in developing countries and in particular in emerging democracies, the role of universities in bridging the gap between research and action, is related to initiatives that establish: a) different forms of collaboration and/or debate with local government – to enhance decision making processes, b) active channels with the media - to create and inform public debate on critical urban issues and c) a clear social mandate to fulfil a key role as links between government and communities, facilitating and informing citizen participation and creating a platform for unrepresented agendas. Universities also have the responsibility to create favourable settings for new collaborations between public institutions and communities by identifying opportunities that would otherwise be left unexplored.

Institutional cooperation key themes

- Defining norms for university collaboration;

- Engaging mutual support policies: cooperation between universities from different regions with activities in other regions and their local universities;

- Action-oriented networking; *sharing organisational experiences* and ways to develop research (e.g. how the developing countries achieve a great deal with

little resources; or how universities in the global north develop institutional networking and funding); sharing outputs and benefits;

- Defining strategies and means to produce connections between university-city-society: how to increase links between universities and local activities (local government, community, non-governmental organizations);

- Partnership in *implementing university actions* and *changes in curricula*.

Conclusion and way forward

The Roundtable was a large panel of individual contributions addressing the multiple aspects and dimensions related to urban sustainability, some of which were pointed out in the setting up stage of the Roundtable. Most contributions did manage to move from broad initial intentions to propositions regarding the four themes (education, research, knowledge management and institutional cooperation), based on the experiences of universities and their representatives. Clearly, the timeframe of the Roundtable would not allow moving from propositions into more systematic considerations and outlines of desirable approaches to urban sustainability. In other words, we have not reached the stage of actually discussing agendas for the four areas of university action.

It was never the intention of the organisers to reach a unified approach or consensus. There is indeed a fine line between the need for systematic approaches on urban sustainability in the four fronts mentioned, and the risks of fixing a general outline which is insensitive to regional specificities [and different views of the overall problematic]. Perhaps it would be more useful to steer discussions on possible paths into more complete approaches and programmes, in a way to recognize that most aspects brought about by the Roundtable, along with previous contributions, can be systematically considered as constitutive of the complex problem of Sustainable Urban Development, and the complex of actions that may be undertaken by universities in that direction. In that sense, one may find a number of interesting suggestions as elements for the major attempt of developing and discussing the agendas.

Nevertheless, the definition of precise approaches is a work that would be better taken up by universities themselves (individually or networked), a work perhaps also potentially oriented by broader discussion and guidelines asserted through discussion. UN-HABITAT Habitat Partner University's initiative may play a key role in that regard.

The Roundtable covered a remarkable number of aspects and dimensions of urban sustainability. However, a few subjects remained unexplored during contributions.

Some absences in the Roundtable

Most notably, there was the absence of emphases on the urgency of technical strategies and solutions for improving the sustainable workings of cities, namely those urban systems and subsystems such as new trends in integrated, mass transport systems, research into education, resource systems and technologies in order to minimise negative externalities of urbanisation.

Also little was said regarding environmental sustainability and its connection to other dimensions of urban sustainability.

There was little discussion on the interrelated social dimensions of urban sustainability and the challenges posed by current unsustainable practices, such as poverty and the role of inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary research (and cross sectional – between universities and social activists and policy-makers) to address such dimensions.

The social scientists attending felt that very little was said about the contribution social scientists can make alongside planners and architects.

It was felt that universities need to recognise the role of indigenous peoples upon whose land they had developed in the past.

Finally, it was felt by some that the emphasis on urban sustainability must include a consideration of how urban areas relate to their hinterlands where much of the natural resource base exists including water, fuel and food.

An urge to systematic university actions

It would be interesting to stimulate discussion and debate and to deepen our considerations, especially regarding the passage from propositions to more systematic university actions and approaches regarding the four themes (education, research, institutional cooperation and knowledge management), i.e. in a way to advance our practices in all those levels as far as Sustainable Urban Development (and the diversity of aspects involved) is concerned.

A NEXT ROUND OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Going beyond sets of intentions into actual university actions as the diversity of ideas brought in the Roundtable seems to require addressing and answering questions of "how" these intentions may be brought into action or being. We would like to ask ALL participants to consider the following questions, and invite responses to them through a next round of communications between participants, now in electronic form.

- How can we bring these ideas into the form of locally sensitive principles and more systematic approaches to teaching, curricula, research, cooperation and knowledge management?
- What changes are necessary in our practices and knowledge as university teachers and researchers? What changes are necessary in our courses and

curricula in order to address more and more issues, like those raised in our Roundtable?

- How can we render practice-oriented knowledge accessible, particularly in recognition of the huge amounts of knowledge and experiences being registered?

Subjects for a next round of discussion

We would like to point out a few suggestions to foster our electronic debate. Along with the number of extremely interesting and welcome contributions listed above, we would reassert that our focus on education, research and knowledge management could be more effective *if we were able to cooperate* in these areas: partnerships, networking, bringing changes to university practices and insert new aspects and problems and challenges systematically into our curricula and in our research areas.

We also would urge furthering discussions on an agenda for *research areas* which could be taken up by universities in cooperative efforts and with the acknowledgement of their activities, perhaps as part of an informal division of research work, concerned explicitly with the need to connect knowledge to the possibility of having positive impacts over local contexts and realities. In this sense, some issues seem to stand out as problems to be dealt with if we are to advance our knowledge of and approaches to urban sustainability.

(i) advance the understanding of urban sustainability and contradictions between different dimensions of the problem (say, the environmental and the economic);

(ii) search for potentially convergent urban solutions which contemplate them as related problems;

(iii) advance the understanding of unsustainable urban forms and the role of cities and their spatialities, working as solutions or means to more sustainable societies.

A particular challenge that seemed to emerge is the potential, apparent contradiction (perhaps the one which can be pointed out more strongly) between the need to increase *methodological practices and tools as means to deepen knowledge* and improve practice within specific urban contexts and the need to relate more closely to *forms of knowledge grounded in particular contexts as part of local forms of (urban) life.* In other words, how we relate to the development of expertise cultures and emphases on forms of knowledge and practices stemming from the grassroots.

Clearly, the former cannot be dismissed: it gathers systematic forms of knowledge also handed by previous generations encompassing broad perspectives to assess problems with intensively developed cognitive means. The second, on the other

hand, brings the perspectives of a large number of agencies enacting their realities *from within* the complexities and instances of experience, with endogenously produced forms of knowing and dealing with challenges of material reproduction solved through local spatial solutions and social skills. Nevertheless, one could break through apparent contradictions in order to see these two collective, historical efforts – however carried out in different instances and means – as sets of informational, cognitive accomplishments structured and shared through communication. As long as they are so, there may be potential for levels of understanding and complementarities; for coupling empirically rich views from within the grassroots and theoretically rich views stemming from academic work. In this sense, suggestions of a growing approximation between universities and students to their contexts may offer just the adequate frame for dialogues between expertise cultures and everyday life practitioners. There could emerge cognitive and practical gains in bringing these distinct social fields and practices into contact. By all means, this seems to be the movement ethically expected from experts.

Finally, in addition to the current effort in engaging with a next step in this exchange, bringing more systematic positions through electronic communication, we would like to point to the possibility of a next Roundtable (in WUF6 or earlier?) with a framework more appropriate to actual debate, in a way to allow the emergence of eventual convergences of propositions as well as potential contradictions between aspects of the Sustainable Urban Development problem and approaches.

Appendix 1: University Roundtable - Extract of the Report of the 5th Session of the World Urban Forum

Universities´ Roundtable – Bridging the gap between research and action at the city level-The role of universities

24 March 2010

Co-Chairs

Ms. Leila Christana Dias, President, Brazilian Association of Postgraduate Programmes and Research in Urban and Regional Planning;

Mr. Vinicius de Moraes Netto, Associate Professor, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil.

Speakers

Mr. Lars Reuterswärd, Director, Global Division, UN-HABITAT;

Mr. Roberto de Souza Salles, Chancellor, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil.

Moderator

Ms. Dory Reeves, Professor, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Highlights of the Roundtable

Mr. De Souza Salles opened the meeting by highlighting the economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainable development and the role universities play in advancing the agenda.

Mr. Reuterswärd emphasized education to hold the key to a better urban future and that urban research should be more focused on demography and the social dimension of rapid urbanization. He emphasized that the urban discourse needs to focus more on the three billion people that would need shelter and urban services by 2050.

The moderators recognized the participants and provided an overview of the geographical spread of the institutions present, highlighted the dimensions of urban sustainability and invited participants to focus their contributions on education, research, knowledge management and institutional strengthening.

With regard to education, contributions from the floor highlighted the need to comprehensively address the social, environmental, economic, cultural and spatial aspects of urban development and bridging the urban divide. Students needed to understand in particular the challenges of the most deprived neighbourhoods. Participants also noted the very low number of urban professionals in developing countries, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa. The floor challenged the traditional demarcation between practitioners and learners and called for education that was grounded in practice, through more problem based learning. One university informed the roundtable that 50 per cent of its

course work was studio work. Many speakers raised the need for integrating the ethical dimension into the studies, otherwise future urban practitioners would not understand how urban form and design must contribute to sustainable development. Students also needed to understand how political actors worked and how to engage with them. Some participants concluded that traditional curricula may not be relevant anymore. Accreditation, often embedded in national legislation, influences curricula and hampers innovative learning and therefore widens the gap between cutting-edge research and education.

Speakers commented that research needed to anticipate the city of the future and consequently a much better model of urban development is needed. Participants also suggested that research needed to be action oriented, inform policy and practice and had to be conducted in close collaboration with communities. The discussants observed that not only academic knowledge, but also local and traditional knowledge needed to be recognized. However, several contradictions were highlighted: Research funding was increasingly only available for empirical, site specific and policy research rather than for fundamental and systemic research. Despite the growing recognition that multidisciplinary approaches were essential for addressing today's challenges, research was so specialized that it was only accessible by a small number of academics.

On knowledge management and institutional strengthening, participants' attention focused on the importance of functioning partnerships amongst all actors. The need for action oriented collaboration and partnerships was discussed and the need for shared best practices was noted. Universities in developing countries were often invited to partner with universities of the developed countries. However, different levels of resources meant that universities in the South would only benefit from joint activities if their capacities were strengthened in the process.

A draft outcome statement to advance the Habitat Partner University initiative was presented and participants were informed that this initiative would be institutionally anchored.

Contributions to the discussions were made with a large geographical spread with inputs from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Finland, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Sweden, United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Emerging Issues

- University education for urban practitioners needs to encompass the multi-disciplinary challenges of sustainable urban development, needs to take the political dimensions in cities into account and needs to link traditional university education and continuous professional development.
- The challenges of sustainable urban development need to be better researched and made available for practitioners and policy makers. At the same time the systemic changes of urbanization need to be better understood.

Appendix 2 Draft Outcome Statement

The following outcome statement was tabled at the Round Table and all participants received a copy. Indirect comments were made on the statement in the form of omissions – the most notable was the obligation on the part of Universities from the developed north and south to collaborate with Universities in the developing south and north. This statement has therefore been added.

Draft Outcome Statements

Sustainable urbanisation: the role of universities

Universities have an important role to play locally, regionally, nationally and internationally in contributing to sustainable urbanisation through teaching, research and knowledge management (engaging with the policy-making and wider community).

Suggested principles

- Excellence: Universities are committed to developing and working to advance sustainable urbanisation.

- Engagement: Universities are committed to engaging with those involved in the governance of urban areas.

- Collaboration: Universities are committed to collaborate more closely on research for sustainable urbanization. Universities from the developed north and south are committed to collaborating with less well resourced Universities in the developing south and north.

- Participation: Universities are committed to supporting the meaningful participation of communities in urban decision-making.

- Access: Universities are committed to engaging in global networks to develop partnerships and collaborations, including between institutions in developed and developing countries.

Universities call on UN-HABITAT to:

- Facilitate regional and global collaboration between universities and other partners.

- Support the HABITAT Partner University (HPU) Network.

- Continue to support a University Roundtable at subsequent World Urban Forums.

- Acknowledge through awards successful collaborations between universities and urban areas to achieve sustainable urbanisation.

- Identify appropriate regional focal points in UN-HABITAT and Universities.

Appendix 3: Statements were provided by

During the University Roundtable statements were provided by the following:

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Tongji University, Shanghai, China
University of Westminster, UK
Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil
Columbia University, New York, USA
University College London, UK
University of British Columbia, Canada
Jesuit University System of Mexico
Universidade Federal de Minbas Gerais, Brazil
El Colegio Mexiquense, Mexico
Bells University of Technology, Nigeria
Rutgers University New Jersey, USA
Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil
Maseno University, Kisumu, Kenya
University of Massachusetts
Aalto University School of Science and Technology, Helsinki, Finland
Universidad San Simon, Bolivia
Royal Holloway, University of London, UK
University of Auckland, New Zealand
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro
University of Texas, Austin, USA
CEPT, Ahmadabad, India
ANPUR, Brazil
University of Technology, Jamaica
National University of Buenos Aires, Argentina
Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden
Catholic University, Leuven, Belgium
Universidade de Brasilia, Brazil
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil
University College London, UK
University of Nairobi, Kenya
University of Lagos, Nigeria

The written responses from representatives of the following other universities were also incorporated into this report:
Darmstadt University of Technology, Germany
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA
Moscow Institute of Architecture, Russia
New School University, USA
UN-HABITAT/ROLAC, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Politecnico di Torino, Italy
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
University of Salford, UK
University of Sydney, Australia
Warsaw School of Economics, Poland
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá, Colombia

Appendix 4: Photos