

Background paper

# Mainstreaming EPM Lessons of Experience at Global Level

## **Importance of mainstreaming lessons of experience of Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) at the global level**

Through SCP/LA21 support, EPM has made an impact in approx. 30 countries. In order to disseminate the many striking examples of positive change achieved in SCP/LA21 cities and countries, there is a need to upscale these experiences on the country level. As well, it is vital to bring the lessons learnt to the global level so that the reality on the ground can influence international debates, international agreements, and global support mechanisms to the benefit of cities and the environment.

## **Linking local/national with global level**

Mechanisms have to be found to ensure that lessons of experience from the local and national levels can be heard at the global level and are used to improve global policies and instruments. Cities contribute enormously to the problems of pollution and unsustainable resource use. But they are also part of the solution in addressing issues of sustainable urban development at the national, regional and global levels. For example, cities can do a great deal to curb CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, to improve wastewater management and to preserve biodiversity.

However, the documentation exercise done for the preparation of this meeting shows that very few cities and countries recognize their role at the global level or do not relate to global issues affecting them. The documentation shows that the main actors who link lessons of experience from EPM with the global level are national governments. In this session we would like to highlight the importance of and identify ways how local authorities, civil society and other actors can link themselves with the global level.

## **Mainstreaming EPM lessons of experience in different areas at the global level:**

As summarized in the attached matrix, there are three areas at the global level where EPM lessons of experience can be integrated:

- Urban development in the form of the Habitat Agenda;
- Environmental management in the form of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and policy fora such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the UNEP and UN-Habitat Governing Councils;
- Poverty reduction through the Millennium Development Goals framework.

We will now explore in more detail what it means to mainstream EPM lessons of experience in these areas.

## **Mainstreaming EPM lessons in international agreements**

Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) are internationally agreed negotiated conventions that define international targets for the protection of the environment. They are very important instruments to protect our planet and its inhabitants from global threats such as hazardous chemicals and waste, depletion of the ozone layer, loss of biodiversity and the adverse effects of climate change. MEAs can also help decision makers and policy makers to formulate regulations and environmental law at the national level. Compliance with such is essential to protect our planet. As cities contribute a great deal to

pollution and unsustainable resource use, they also have an important role to play in meeting the targets of the MEAs.

*But how can cities integrate lessons of successful experience into the international debate?* Influencing the *national* level is a first step. Lessons of experience from improved urban management practices at the local level can be used to improve national policies for urban development, environmental management and poverty reduction. City participation in meetings at the national level facilitates information sharing. City experiences are an important resource for decision-makers at this level. National governments that are informed about urban concerns do not only improve national decision-making and policies, they can also take these concerns and demands to the *global* level. For this reason, there needs to be a mechanism for policy dialogue between cities and national governments.

As already mentioned before, cities and their residents are directly affected by environmental problems. But it is especially the urban poor that are most dependent on environmental services such as clean water, clean air, and shelter. The poor do not have the financial means to use alternatives and buy clean water or build houses in less polluted neighborhoods as the rich do. On the other hand, the poor also contribute to the degradation of the environment because they are often forced to use natural resources in an unsustainable way. For these reasons, there is a strong interrelation between poverty and the environment. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reducing poverty will therefore only be possible with the full participation of the world's urban centres.

All cities and countries work on poverty reduction, however these activities are not clearly undertaken within the framework of MDGs. Using the MDG framework brings advantages of coherence, comparability, and accessibility to funding. A lot is done at the local level to respond to the challenges of the MDGs, however EPM experience is not properly capitalized in order to contribute to the international debate on poverty reduction.

- Which experiences in poverty reduction from the EPM process could your country bring to the September summit on MDGs in NY?

### **Mainstreaming EPM in international information mechanisms**

Often, cities are not aware to what extent global environmental issues have a direct impact on the well-being of urban residents and how much they contribute to these problems. In other cases they are addressing the issues unconsciously and not benefiting from the wealth of knowledge available.

Take a global issue such as climate change. Today, cities are the major contributors to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to the use of fossil fuels as an energy source, as well as industrial and vehicular emissions. By carrying out activities against climate change such as reducing traffic and introducing energy efficient housing, cities address both local air quality and therefore health. This is just one example of how win-win situations can be created by addressing global environmental issues at the local level.

Successful experiences in addressing global issues at local and national levels through EPM application are not systematically collected and disseminated. This would be an effective way to mainstream lessons of experience from EPM in international information mechanisms such as websites, databases, and publications of relevant UN agencies and international city networks.

- How can lessons of experience from the EPM process be used in international information mechanisms?

### **Mainstreaming EPM lessons of experience in international normative work**

We have just gone through the Governing Councils of UNEP and UN-HABITAT. There was almost no mentioning of EPM related experience and lessons learnt. UN resolutions in Governing Councils are a way of fixing norms in the field of urban development and environmental management.

But how do cities directly affect the formation and development of *global* norms and policies? Lessons learned at the local level can be used by national governments to improve global policies for sustainable urban development. Participation in intergovernmental meetings, such as the Governing Councils of UNEP and UN-HABITAT and the Commission on Sustainable Development, or in international city-to-city fora such as the World Urban Forum and the regular global meetings of the Sustainable Cities Programme and the Localising Agenda 21 Programme allow concrete experiences from the city level to feed into and inform the formulation of policies at the global level. Global agendas, more informed on the situation in the cities, are better prepared to respond to urban needs and to take advantage of urban strengths. Many cities are already implementing policies and activities which link directly to global agendas. Cities can use global city networks such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to speak in one voice at international meetings.

- How can we ensure that national delegations participating in policy fora can use lessons of experience from the EPM process to improve international norms?

### **Mainstreaming EPM lessons of experience in international financial and technical support mechanisms**

There are several international financial and technical support mechanisms that operate at the city level. The Cities Alliance (of which UN-Habitat, UNEP, The World Bank and several bilateral donors are members), the Partnership for Clean Fuels and vehicles and networks such as ICLEI are one example. Through UNDP, UNEP and The World Bank the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is currently supporting national governments in implementing MEAs in their countries. UNEP is exploring ways to make GEF more responsive to national and local needs. UN-HABITAT, UNEP, UNDP and other UN as well as many bilateral aid organizations can provide advice and technical support on environment and poverty related policy development and implementation.

- How can EPM be used as a recognized mechanism in activities supported by international financial and technical mechanisms?

### **Conclusion**

- Do you believe that EPM lessons of experience can contribute to improve international instruments and mechanisms?
- Is your country using EPM lessons of experience to contribute to the debate on global issues? How much did you personally contribute to make this happened?
- If this has not happened so far, what are the constraints to mainstream EPM lessons of experience at the global level?

<b>Mainstreaming EPM lessons of experience at global level</b>			
<b>Mainstreaming where?</b>	<b>Areas of concern: Urban development, environmental management, poverty reduction and governance</b>	<b>Who can contribute to mainstreaming?</b>	<b>How can mainstreaming be enhanced?</b>
International Agreements	<input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) <input type="checkbox"/> WSSD Plan of Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> UNEP Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity Building	<input type="checkbox"/> International organizations (UN-Habitat, UNEP, UNDP etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Ministries <input type="checkbox"/> Associations of Local Authorities <input type="checkbox"/> Civil society	<input type="checkbox"/> Using targets and goals of international agreements and adapting them to local level
International information mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/> Documentation <input type="checkbox"/> Publications <input type="checkbox"/> Websites <input type="checkbox"/> Databases <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines, eg "Habitat debate", UNEP's "Our Planet"	<input type="checkbox"/> International media <input type="checkbox"/> International organizations (UN-Habitat, UNEP etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Publishing lessons of experience
International normative work	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidelines and tools (EPM, natural resources and environmental management) <input type="checkbox"/> UN-Habitat and UNEP Governing Councils <input type="checkbox"/> Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) <input type="checkbox"/> Regional commissions and ministerial networks (AMCOW, AMCEN, AMCHUD)	<input type="checkbox"/> International organizations (UN-Habitat, UNEP etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Ministries <input type="checkbox"/> International EPM experts	<input type="checkbox"/> Revising guidelines and tools, incorporating lessons of experience <input type="checkbox"/> Influencing decision-makers in national governments <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in strategy formulation, revision and implementation monitoring
International Capacity building mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/> Training of trainers <input type="checkbox"/> Sectoral capacity building <input type="checkbox"/> Training for negotiators	<input type="checkbox"/> International organizations (UN-Habitat, UNEP etc) <input type="checkbox"/> International specialised training institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Organising, supporting and participating in international training of trainers
International financial support mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical cooperation <input type="checkbox"/> Capital investments <input type="checkbox"/> Small grants	<input type="checkbox"/> Bilateral support agencies <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP <input type="checkbox"/> World Bank <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Banks <input type="checkbox"/> Cities Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Submitting project proposals
International technical support mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/> EPM technical backstopping <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental specialised expertise <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty specialised expertise	<input type="checkbox"/> International organizations (UN-Habitat, UNEP, UNDP etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Other bi- and multilateral support programmes	<input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening global programmes