

# **MODERATORS' REPORT ON THE E-DEBATE ON INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION (DIALOGUE 3), 2-23 NOVEMBER 2009**

## **PART 1 OVERVIEW**

### **1. Introduction**

This e-Debate took place as part of the preparatory process for the Fifth World Urban Forum (WUF5) that will take place in Rio de Janeiro from 22-26<sup>th</sup> March 2010 on the subject of ‘The Right to the City: bridging the urban divide’. It was moderated by Prof David Simon, assisted by Ms Hayley Leck (both of Royal Holloway, University of London) and ran for the scheduled three weeks, Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009. It attracted sustained interest and contributions from a worldwide pool of participants. Unlike its two predecessor e-Debates, therefore, there was no need to extend its duration.

Altogether there have been six themed e-Debates, each one contributing directly to their respective Dialogue at WUF5. At the conclusion of each e-Debate, the moderators were charged with compiling a report that will be discussed within UN-HABITAT and will be presented by the moderator at the public session on the respective Dialogue in Rio. This mechanism is intended to ensure that the key ideas and outcomes will feed directly into the ‘live’ discussion and eventual outcomes of the respective Dialogues. This process has been devised in order to ensure that as many people of all backgrounds and locations around the world have an opportunity to contribute ideas, even if they cannot physically attend WUF5.

The Dialogue on Inclusive Sustainable Urbanization develops the notion that in order to tackle the real and adverse impacts of climate change, cities and governments must develop policy responses and effective measures that deal directly and simultaneously with physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural vulnerabilities.

In other words, priority must be given to flexible physical/spatial planning and access to land and housing that will promote adaptive strategies to guide the evolving forms and structures of cities in ways that help to reduce social, economic and spatial segregation and inequality. The determination of sites and locations where people live and economic activities take place, as well as the means to enable the urban mobility needed to mitigate spatial and social inequality, are all part of the same equation. These need to be dealt with within a framework that recognises social inclusiveness as paramount for achieving more sustainable urbanisation under conditions of rapid environmental change and considerable uncertainty.

Residents of slums and informal settlements are usually the principal victims of floods, landslides, and anthropogenic disasters because they can find or build their own accommodation only in unsuitable and risky locations. Social and environmental vulnerability generally coincide. Highlighting these connections and promoting mitigation and adaptation measures to promote equity and environmental sustainability are likely to produce better and more resilient cities.

## **2. Key questions for this e-Debate**

Over the three weeks of this e-Debate, we posed and discussed a series of questions designed to address different aspects of inclusivity in relation to sustainable urbanization. In particular, we addressed:

- General issues on sustainable urbanization
- Improving local resilience in cities
- Environmental impacts on the urban poor
- How can we engage communities effectively?
- Mainstreaming vulnerability reduction measures
- Localising adaptation policies and plans, and
- Climate change and human rights

## **3. Rules for Participation**

In common with the other e-Debates, simple rules for participants were made explicit in the welcome and introductory message.

- a) Contributors were asked to write concisely and clearly, focusing on the core of the questions and concentrating on giving a response to the questions posted or points made by other participants.
- b) Slang, slanderous and potentially libellous claims were to be avoided. It was made explicit that the moderators would edit out any that were encountered, or even exclude entire contributions that were generally inappropriate.
- c) While the language of the e-Debate was English, contributions in other languages were welcomed, with the promise that English translations would be posted where practicable (see Section 4 below).
- d) While general observations or thoughts were welcomed, we encouraged contributors to illustrate these by means of specific examples (with enough detail for people not familiar with a particular city or experience to grasp its significance) of issues to address, of good or bad practice, or lessons to be learned. These were to be kept relevant to the questions being discussed and the overall objective of the e-Debate, otherwise the moderators would not be able to include them.

## **4. Role of the Moderators and Conduct of the e-Debate**

The moderators adopted a relatively proactive approach, gently but clearly guiding discussion by posing questions and requests for information, responding to particular contributions, raising further questions and eliciting examples of good practice. Given the likely diversity of participants in such a Dialogue, where anyone based anywhere in the world with Internet access could register, follow the discussions and post a contribution, great care was taken to use clear English and avoid jargon. If we were asked questions by participants, we took care to answer them as fully and frankly as practicable. Similarly, if we were aware of examples or evidence that ran counter to

what somebody had suggested, this was pointed out in courteous and respectful terms. Overall, our intention was to create an open dialogue with ourselves as facilitators. In order to avoid appearing overbearing, all-knowing or as though we were indulging in private conversations with individuals or seeking to steer the debate rigidly towards predetermined outcomes, we used discretion in deciding when and how to respond. It was important to resist the temptation (and occasional invitation) to respond to each contribution or contributor.

Participants appreciated this mode of engagement – often saying so explicitly but this was also discernible from the tenor and frequency of contributions. Indeed, a number of participants became regular contributors, responding to points raised by us as well as by others. Some participants focused on one particular topic but other regular contributors engaged with several.

Although one role of the moderators was to screen out inappropriate, abusive or libellous contributions, not one single such posting was received. Indeed, the entire process was conducted in a courteous, respectful and friendly atmosphere. Editorially, the only interventions we made were:

(a) Since it became clear at the outset that some contributors' written English was not good, we corrected grammar and syntax in order to facilitate understanding and the flow of discussion by the polylingual set of participants. Content was not altered in any other way.

(b) In order to maximise the diversity of participation, we undertook to post contributions in languages other than English and to provide translations where practicable. In the event, only a handful of contributions were made in other languages (Portuguese, Spanish and French), making translation very manageable.

(c) We did occasionally move or hold over contributions that were more appropriate for other topics or issues posed in subsequent questions.

## **5. Patterns of Participation**

Over the three weeks of the eDebate, a total of 171 postings were received from 104 unique participants, including the two moderators.

*Distribution by Topic:* This activity, which includes posts by the moderators, was spread across the respective themes as indicated in Table 1. Aside from the opening welcome and closing notices, there were 7 substantive discussion topics.

Somewhat surprisingly, in view of the moderators' careful introductions to the eDebate as a whole and to the individual topics as they were opened up, by a considerable margin the most popular topic was the catch-all 'General sustainable urbanization', to which less specific contributions were submitted or to which we moved postings that did not fit neatly into other topics. Two possible reasons for its popularity were (a) that it ran for the full duration of the eDebate, and (b) that many people wanted to communicate or ask questions about issues that were not directly pertinent to the specific topics.

The second most popular topic was about effective community engagement (38 postings by 23 different people). This is encouraging since everyone recognised the vital importance of working from the bottom up with and through local communities as primary beneficiaries. Sustained discussion ensued on a few threads and we elicited good examples of successful interventions and of what to avoid. These are discussed in the next section.

**Table 1 DIALOGUE TOPICS**

|   | Contributions | Participants |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| Welcome   | 4             | 3            |
| General sustainable urbanization                | 58            | 27           |
| Improving local resilience in cities            | 30            | 15           |
| Environmental impacts on the urban poor         | 22            | 17           |
| How can we engage communities effectively?      | 38            | 23           |
| Mainstreaming vulnerability reduction measures  | 5             | 5            |
| Localising adaptation policies and plans        | 8             | 7            |
| Climate change and human rights                 | 5             | 6            |
| Debate closing today: your concluding comments? | 1             | 1            |

At the other end of the spectrum, there were disappointingly few contributions on mainstreaming vulnerability reduction measures, on localising adaptation policies and plans, and on climate change and human rights. The first two of these we had anticipated being far more popular – indeed, we had hoped for this in order to be able to elicit ideas and examples of good practice from around the world to take forward at WUF5. Apart from a certain overlap among topics (which we tried to minimise by careful posing of questions and by moving contributions that were clearly more appropriate in another topic), we can suggest two possible reasons: first, that these topics were introduced during weeks two and three, thus leaving less time for contributions. We did notice a slight tapering off in the flow of contributions towards the end. Second, these topics are relatively novel and perhaps not yet widely enough embedded in practice to provide a ready set of examples known to our contributors.

The topic on climate change and human rights is definitely novel, and we are most grateful to Mr Ulrik Halsteen of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the extended introductory contribution to set the ball rolling. Unfortunately, however, he was on mission and unable to do this until the final few days of the e-Debate. This delay surely contributed to the low level of responses on this particular topic.

*Geographical Distribution:* Table 2 provides a breakdown of contributions by country. Altogether 32 countries are represented, covering all the inhabited continents. However, sub-Saharan Africa had the strongest presence, in terms both of number of countries represented and the number of contributions. Asia came a distant second, followed by Latin America. This high level of participation in regions of the global South is to be welcomed. Conversely, participation from OECD countries (apart from the moderators) was disappointing. Perhaps this reflected a sense that these debates were of less relevance there, although many Northern-based specialists and members

of relevant research and policy networks that were contacted directly and encouraged to participate clearly opted not to. This is probably the one disappointment felt by the moderators, although it did have the corollary of not diluting or drowning out the voices from the global South as does sometimes happen in such global for a.

## **Table 2 Breakdown of Contributions by Country**

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| United Kingdom              | 35 |
| Nigeria                     | 27 |
| Uganda                      | 21 |
| Togo                        | 15 |
| Ethiopia                    | 11 |
| Nepal                       | 8  |
| Cameroon                    | 5  |
| Ghana                       | 5  |
| India                       | 5  |
| Kenya                       | 5  |
| Philippines                 | 5  |
| Jamaica                     | 4  |
| South Africa                | 4  |
| Brazil                      | 3  |
| Colombia                    | 3  |
| Cuba                        | 2  |
| Denmark                     | 2  |
| Italy                       | 2  |
| Mexico                      | 2  |
| United Republic of Tanzania | 2  |
| United States of America    | 2  |
| Australia                   | 1  |
| Bangladesh                  | 1  |
| Bolivia                     | 1  |
| Canada                      | 1  |
| Egypt                       | 1  |
| Germany                     | 1  |
| Kiribati                    | 1  |
| Nicaragua                   | 1  |
| Peru                        | 1  |
| Portugal                    | 1  |
| Zimbabwe                    | 1  |

Disaggregating the data by country provides some additional useful insights. The moderators account for the great majority of UK records and that country's pre-eminent position. Only four other countries, namely Nigeria, Uganda, Togo and Ethiopia, recorded double-digit levels of activity. Interestingly, these are all in sub-Saharan Africa. This 'traffic' was mostly accounted for by high levels of participation by two to four participants in each country. Six further countries recorded 5 – 8 postings – all from one or two individuals in each case. Three of these countries are in Asia (Nepal, India and the Philippines) and two in sub-Saharan Africa (Cameroon and Ghana).

Ten countries were the source of 2 – 4 contributions each, and a further 11 just one each. However, this long tail to the distribution remains significant in terms not only of providing the wide geographical spread of the e-Debate but also in that some of the contributions were very valuable.

## **6. Lessons Learned**

Overall, the moderators consider the e-Debate on Inclusive Sustainable Urbanization to have been very successful and to have achieved its objectives. Specific lessons to bear in mind for any future such Internet debates are:

- a) the role of the moderators and their mode of engagement is very important. The clear but gentle role outlined above worked extremely well and certainly encouraged ongoing participation by some contributors. Central to this was a willingness to engage actively and to respond as an equal to questions or inaccurate points made but to avoid having too heavy a presence in the debate.
- b) The willingness to translate contributions from other languages was helpful; if UN translation facilities can be secured in advance in future, this is likely to encourage broader participation since the moderators are not (and should not be) selected for their breadth of linguistic expertise.
- c) Topics introduced in the second half of the three-week period of this e-Debate received fewer contributions, even though they were important. Early topics received the bulk of contributions, probably because they benefited from initial curiosity and interest when the e-Debate was launched and/or because they were open for longer and/or were more ‘familiar’ topics than the later ones. This suggests that our logic of attempting to foster the sequential development of topics that fed into or followed from one another – also moving from more conventional to more novel topics – may not have yielded optimal results. Depending on the nature of the respective topics and how closely related they are, future moderators might consider introducing all topics at the outset or within a few days of one another.
- d) Geographically, contributors came from every inhabited continent and a total of 32 countries. Importantly, sub-Saharan Africa was the dominant region for contributions other than by the moderators, despite comparatively low Internet penetration. They were located in both Anglophone and Francophone but not Lusophone countries, which are among the poorest and least Internet-enabled on the continent. While it is therefore important to remain mindful that such Internet-based debates exclude potential participants without private, workplace or Internet café access to the Internet, patterns of participation from poor countries are encouraging.
- e) Following on from (d) above is a question about who the participants were. Other than in their initial registration for the online Forum (details of which have not been made available to the moderators), participants did not have to declare their professional status or institutional affiliation. While a few did so spontaneously, most did not. It is therefore impossible to explore whether and

to what extent the participants were skewed in favour of local authority urban planners/development managers, academics, private consultants, NGO, INGO or IGO officials relative to interested laypeople. This would have been helpful in assessing contributions and might be a useful requirement in future. On the other hand, such a public declaration might deter some people from participating, particularly if expressing personal views that differed from their employers' formal positions. Perhaps, therefore, the optimal solution would be to perform this analysis on the registration data.

## **PART 2 KEY THEMES RAISED IN THE DEBATE**

These summaries are organised by topic and presented in bullet point form for the sake of brevity and clarity.

### **General Sustainable Urbanization**

- We are facing an **urban future** which presents both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development
- Capacity building and inclusive community participation are central to inclusive sustainable urbanization
- gender mainstreaming and specific considerations for women – e.g. women's rights, participation, land ownership etc are fundamental for sustainable urbanization
- Need to consider cities as a whole and consider all their interconnected systems and functions
- Sustainability needs to be thought of in a holistic and inclusive manner
- Consideration and fostering of rural-urban linkages and relationships is central to achieving sustainable urbanization. Can't consider urban areas in isolation from broader surroundings.
- Sustainability/sustainable development mean different things to different people and when talking about sustainability we need to be specific about our understanding of it. However, there is general agreement that there are different layers of sustainability comprising interconnected environmental, social, cultural and economic spheres
- Consideration of future generations is necessary for inclusive sustainable development
- partnerships and co-operation between civil society, government, NGOs etc are important

- good leadership/leaders required
- rural-urban migration is a central consideration for sustainable urbanization – e.g. measures to prevent migration versus measures to improve conditions for migrants
- good, long term planning is required
- need to focus on providing services to informal settlements
- equitable access to land is essential
- benefits of urban agriculture
- corruption is an obstacle to sustainable development
- the developed world should take the lead but developing countries need to take responsibility too and take sustainability into account from the outset
- creating employment and economic opportunities for the urban poor is necessary for sustainable urban development

### **Improving Local Resilience**

- The central role of *LOCAL CHAMPIONS* – mentioned in most contributions
- Importance of resilient and inclusive delivery systems
- Issues around the need for political will and the prevalent apathy of government officials to environmental issues and not taking environmental issues seriously
- The need for support from stakeholders and constant public consultation (participatory integrative planning)
- The pressing need for disaster preparedness and risk prevention plans to enhance resilience, as well as the allocation of specific emergency funds and mainstreaming of adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
- Opposing/conflicting interests between and within communities and political leaders
- Increasing vulnerability of urban dwellers due to many interconnected factors, e.g. increased exposure to hazards and extreme events, lack of services and adequate housing, poverty and lack of capacity
- Need for empowerment, capacity building and education



- Collaborative efforts between government, NGOs, local communities etc are vital for building resilience
- Importance of optimal ecosystem functioning for building resilience e.g. wise use of wetlands and rivers
- Importance of full consideration of local political and cultural contexts

### **Environmental Impacts on the Urban Poor**

- The need for capacity building amongst the urban poor
- The need for creating economic opportunities for the urban poor
- Central role of political leadership and government in addressing problems
- Need for collaborative efforts e.g. public-private partnership (PPP) or between local people and government
- Involvement of stakeholders in all projects/interventions
- Role of education: e.g. on risk preparedness, best practices
- Inappropriate planning and lack of regulations permitting inappropriate dev e.g. on wetlands
- Disproportionate impacts on urban poor **versus** the contention that we are all vulnerable (e.g. contributions by Patgreen, Gennaro)
- Several issues on slums/informal settlements mentioned, e.g. need to develop services in slums versus demolition
- Inhabitants of informal settlements are disproportionately vulnerable to environmental impacts

### **How to Engage Communities Effectively**

- Need to recognize and respect that communities are different and be sensitive to the role of culture, traditions, values and communication methods when engaging communities
- Key role of innovative communication methods (e.g. radio, motorcycle, mobile phones) for engaging communities – especially for creating awareness about disasters etc

- YOUTH and WOMEN need to be targeted and centrally involved for effective community engagement
- Gaining community TRUST is imperative
- Consideration of local context is central
- Uncertainty on how actually to engage communities in practice and lack of ‘models’/structures to follow to ensure appropriate engagement
- Key role of ICTs and other technology in empowerment and facilitating effective community engagement
- Participation needs to be all inclusive – ensuring especially that the marginalised poor are engaged and not just elites
- Effective engagement requires bottom-up approaches, but bottom-up approaches are not necessarily all-inclusive (so this needs to be taken in conjunction with the previous bullet point in relation to any excluded or marginalised groups, however defined)
- Government accountability and good urban governance need to be ensured
- Information and experience sharing and collaboration between local communities, leaders and business are crucial
- City as an artificial human creation versus the natural environment or nature within the city
- Engaging communities effectively presents many challenges and is difficult in practice, especially when attempting to reconcile multiple perspectives
- Benefits versus shortfalls of financial motivations/incentives for communities (especially the poor but also time-poor groups) to engage
- People have other pressing priorities (e.g. survival) that may prevent them from engaging
- Participation needs to be community driven

### **Mainstreaming vulnerability reduction measures**

- The history of building codes and sustainable housing construction in the Caribbean has not only revealed risk preparedness, but also vulnerability reduction procedures that have resulted in legislation changes with mainstream consequences.

- NGOs often consult groups at local level to synthesise community or group learning as the basis for advocacy with the state, yet despite regular communications, little is known about how the government reacts or responds to such advocacy.

### **Localising Adaptation Policies and Plans**

- Full and effective participation of stakeholders at all stages is necessary, especially to create a sense of ownership and 'hope' for local communities and establish an understanding of local issues
- The starting point of adaptation plans must be with local communities and scaled up
- There is a need for greater education and awareness raising about cc and the likely impacts thereof, particularly with regards to issues specific to the local context
- Collaborative learning and implementation of projects is central, e.g. between local people, NGOs, government etc.
- Several specific examples and recommendations are provided in the e-debate
- Poverty is the root of many problems
- Inadequate waste management in cities is a major problem
- Key theme arising from several debates is the importance **of innovative communication methods**, especially as disaster warning mechanisms, e.g. radio broadcasts and motor vehicles with loudspeakers

### **Climate Change and Human Rights**

- Climate change affects many fundamental human rights via the ability to meet basic needs as well as safety and security. UNOHCHR has detailed these
- Marginal urban settlements, e.g. in the Arctic or Australian outback, are very vulnerable to climate change, and entire communities and their livelihoods will be impact. Yet, they lack resources to adapt so sustainable adaptation measures will need to be comprehensive and well articulated to local conditions
- Urban life is relatively safe because it provides relatively artificial or adopted livelihoods. Nevertheless, urban dwellers will ultimately suffer natural calamities and shortages of basic needs. Hence urban human rights require nature conservation everywhere

- The rights of individuals are often sacrificed. The right to human dignity for all should be central
- Climate change affects right to life and security, the right to food, and the right to health, especially where displacement occurs through war and civil conflict

### **PART 3 COMPILATIONS OF DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS BY TOPIC**

Here we reproduce the most substantive, insightful or thoughtful contributions and those containing specific case studies or examples with sufficient detail to provide useful inputs later on in the Dialogue and CCCI processes. Sufficient of the continuity of discussion is reproduced to convey a sense of how interaction occurred and debate evolved. In each case, the contributor, date and country of residence are recorded for ease of referencing. Similarly, key terms, ideas or case studies are highlighted in bold for some topics to facilitate the searchability of this record.

#### **General Sustainable Urbanization**

##### **Barbaro, 2.11.2009, Cuba**

Hello to everyone and thanks for the opportunity to participate in this exchange. Very interesting and necessary subjects for the debate. In order to begin, I will write on how could we improve the resilience of the cities before meteorological and climatological extremes.

An action to apply is the development of urban agriculture. This is a source of production of foods, which contribute to eliminate the pressure face to climate change and variability and the overexploitation of agrosystems.

Urban agriculture like has been said is a source of food production, that does not require of great investments, neither expenses, nor emissions of polluting agents. It is a profitable economic activity and producing of gains, it generates employs and social welfare. It produces foods applying ecological agriculture principles, although it does not have to discard the use of chemistries in small scale, that stimulates the production. He is able to produce foods in just a short time, reason why it contributes the resilience, before extreme climatologic events. When the agricultural areas are devastated by hurricanes, in a short period of time urban agriculture has been able to produce first agricultural foods within reach of the population.

Equally, it uses residual urban solids, applied in the fertilization avoiding the emission of these. Moreover avoiding the emissions associated with the transport of foods from great distances.

It contributes to the improvement of the environment, increasing the green areas in the urban spaces, counteracting in some measure the effect of heat island and enriching the biodiversity of these zones. (not only the flora, also de fauna with presence the birds, etc) I think, the greatest threat is the water consumption, that also will be affected by climatic change and the over-operation of the water supply, but the use of the liquids waste, once treated, and the application of systems of irrigation of high retention of the humidity and low pressure, can contribute to eliminate the pressures on the hydric resource.

These reasons, by single mentioning some, invite to develop the urban agriculture, to improve the resilience of the urban spaces, although it is very important the inclusion of these in a the physical planning of the cities, taking advantage of the most suitable sites

for their development.

**Tasneem, 03.11.2009, India**

Would be great to define sustainability first, and what do we mean when we talk of sustainable urbanisation.

Can cities continue to grow while reducing their impact, and then is it really possible? should they try to self sufficient where they contribute to producing what they need like energy and food? Can we call a city sustainable just so because it runs on efficient public transport yet the consumption levels are very high with a high per capita carbon footprint?

We all have a slightly different notion of sustainability. If I have to define what it would have to be for my city [Pune], I may talk of clean environment, low pollution, controlled population, low levels of inequality and decrease in consumption levels, and waste, healthy and equitable. But I would also need to add the dimension of economics in this. It would be very interesting to see how that cuts across.

In a recent conversation with a corporate representative for green energy, his notion of sustainability, was first the capacity to be able to work as a business enterprise so that the green business can be sustained for long and does not die out.. a very valid point.

There are different layers and some of it not known to all of us at the same time. It would be good to lay them all out and then having done that, figure out the ways to achieve it with planning, implementation and participation by all the stakeholders.

**Fineman, 04.11.2009, Nigeria**

In inclusive sustainable Urbanization women's right need to be look into with kin interest in meeting their gender concern, for the research that was carry out many year it was showed that the implementation of women's rights to land, property and housing remains a formidable challenge facing the world today. This challenge persists despite a host of international human rights standard, were women's land, property and inheritance rights are seen as an important and human development.

Too often inheritance is treated as a peripheral issue in policies concerning security of tenure. Yet inheritance is the commonest way women are denied fair access to land, in a number of countries, the constitution still allows discrimination customary practices against women.

In an effort to strengthen gender mainstreaming in its activities, UN-HABITAT initiated the development of resource materials on gender and post-crisis governance, reconstruction and land administration, gender in local governance, and best practices in gender mainstreaming in human settlements development.

The agency produced a work entitled, gender in local governance, a source book for trainers, it is aimed at addressing the knowledge gap on gender and human settlement development. Gender mainstreaming work intensified in the areas of developing pro-poor and gender sensitive land tools under the Global land tools Network, and promoting cities which are safe for all, men, women and children, with particular emphasis on using urban planning to ensure women's safety in public spaces.

Said by: Enohuwa.F. Obamwonyi. As Fineman.

**Fineman, 06.11.2009, Nigeria**

this discussion what took place some time ago disseminating best practices, the transfer of the best practices and the application of lessons learned in 2007 took on a growing international impetus. UN-HABITAT joined the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Network of Innovators in Public Administration in the Mediterranean Region at the Seventh Global Forum on Re-inventing Government in Vienna to exchange lessons on transfer of innovations to enhance responsiveness of governments.

A manual on best practice transfers for joint publication was developed testing and publication in 2008. It also joined several Latin American civil society organizations in a best practices transfer event in Colombia. The event brought together several winners of

the Dubai International Award as well as similar Latin American initiatives for mutual exchange and documentation of lessons learned.

The UN-HABITAT Seville Best Practices Center facilitated best practices exchange meetings between Israeli and Palestinian mayors and local authority representatives. The center also continued to promote contacts between European local authorities with counterparts in the developing world.

Re-Said By: Enohuwa. F. Obamwonyi. As. Fineman.

#### **Eleonora, 07.11.2009, Brazil**

A urbanização sustentável deveria ser um pacto entre a população e a e o poder público, pelo menos no Brasil e principalmente nas cidades de médio e pequeno porte, onde o diálogo é mais perto e o retorno rápido.

[Rough translation by DS: Sustainable urbanisation requires a pact with the population - popular power; in Brazil this is principally being done in cities of small and medium capacity through dialogue where greater proximity yields rapid returns.]

#### **Fineman, 08.11.2009, Nigeria**

To sustain urbanization I would presume that as the majority of the world begins to live in cities, attitudes to cities will change. Indeed, the views of academics, analysts, policy makers, donors, NGOs, and the like, need to change towards a more positive, welcoming attitude to urbanization and urban growth: it is only if this attitudinal change take place that we can begin to think constructively about all the serious problems that we are likely to face and to then have a chance of solving them.

We must change our attitude from being afraid of urbanization to preparing for it, the starting point for justifying this point of view must be the realization that, despite unprecedented urbanization over the last 50 years, and indeed the whole twentieth century, overall welfare has actually increased in almost every dimension that we can think of: income growth, poverty reduction, and access to electricity, telecommunications, water, sanitation, education and health. Never before have as many people had the kind of access to services as they do today; there are some in the world today who do not have access to all this mentioned above, but today many now have better access to all this than where they came from.

But, of course, we have a long way to go, widespread all pervading urbanization is a truly twentieth-century phenomenon. Although we have evidence of cities in antiquity, such as Memphis, Babylon, Thebes, Athens, Sparta, Mohenjodaro, among other, there is little evidence of widespread urbanization in the early years of civilization.

Rome was perhaps the first city to reach a population of one million around the time of Jesus Christ, only in 1800 did London become the second city to reach this size.

Said by: Enohuwa. F. Obamwonyi. As. Fineman.

#### **Bigeorgi, 09.11.2009, Denmark**

For me, cities are living (eco)systems which consist of two major elements - the urban design and people. The functioning of the city and if it is sustainable (in environmental, social and economic terms) depends on the organisation of these two "elements" and their interactions. Urban design can enable (or not) sustainability and more sustainable lifestyles but if we forget people's culture, needs and wants the system will not work. People and culture are often forgotten or underestimated when designing for sustainable cities.

Furthermore, there is a good message. Urbanisation is no evil, yet a well done urbanisation brings up sustainability potentials. The compactness of cities enables to deliver goods and services much more efficient (with less transport and energy per capita) than in rural areas. Thus in many developed countries, city residents live more efficient and sustainable than rural residents; however, unfortunately both still at a much higher level than in developing countries. But the potential is there!

### **Barbaro, 09.11.2009, Cuba**

From my point of view, Cuba is using the urban agriculture as adaptation measures to climate change and to face meteorological extremes. The affectations in this kind of agriculture are minimal. Its structure is not expensive and it is easy to protect with walls. The recuperation process is also available in short time.

It is necessary harvest the products before the climate extreme and after that begins the recuperation of the production.

I think an essential action is an effective early warning. So, with this information we can plan the actions. The physical planning of this agriculture is a very important action. Its location in non-vulnerable zones to strong winds and flooding is important. The planning of cultures and the monitoring of their phenologic phases are also necessary knowledge. The effective uses of the water, the retention of humidity, are useful tools and measures face the droughts. It is always necessary to know the hazards, (frequency, intensity, etc), and the vulnerabilities, (exposure, resistance and resilience).

The development of an adequate risk management program and contingency plans in the urban agriculture is also necessary, considering aspects of decreasing vulnerability and avoid hazards.

### **Fineman, 09.11.2009, Nigeria**

The old thinking toward sustaining urbanization, I have also been around long enough to witness some change in my community thinking about urbanization. The old thinking was that urbanization was a bad thing - that it led to people living in miserable conditions in slums with few opportunities to find work, educate their children or to escape poverty. Public policy was regarded as biased towards cities which in turn, increased the attraction of rural people to urban areas.

In those days, cities were viewed as incapable of providing the services and the jobs the rural migrants were looking for.

We - and I believe the development community in general - were genuinely interested in finding ways to encourage people to stay in rural areas where they could continue their traditional subsistence lifestyles rather than migrate to cities and possibly face the destruction of social networks and have to deal with crime, violence and squalor.

The new thinking towards sustaining urbanization: Nowhere is this thinking more evident than in China, it was Deng Xiao Ping who recognized around 20 years ago that people needed to be able to seek wealth and build productive ways of living. Cities were recognized as growth poles, each one sending a wave of economic growth to its hinterland. Between 1980 - when reforms began - and 2000, 268 million Chinese people migrated from rural to urban areas and that movement of people to cities continues to this day.

Extreme poverty rates among rural populations dropped dramatically from 37 percent in the mid 1970s to five percent in 2001. Urbanization became the basic pillar of China's economic growth and by 2020, we expect that 60 percent of Chinese people will be living in urban areas.

Said By: Enohuwa.F.Obamwonyi. As: Fineman.

### **Okumedjro, 09.11.2009, Togo**

la jeunesse est aujourd'hui un élément de priorité dans les mécanismes de mise en oeuvre de processus de développement durable. sa prise en compte et son implication dans les décisions concernant le logement et les services sociaux, la gestion urbaine, l'environnement et les infrastructures, l'évaluation, la surveillance et l'information sont en effet, un facteur important qui favorise le développement urbain qui est un maillon du développement durable.

Elle produirait des effets dynamiques et positifs pour instaurer des politiques, des Stratégies et des systèmes de prestation de services sociaux qui répondent aux besoins des groupes vulnérables et à l'environnement, pour peu que ses ressources soient utilisées

objectivement et rationnellement pour l'établissement humain.

Alors les jeunes sont conviés à s'engager pour aménager et entretenir des infrastructures et des services dans les secteurs de l'approvisionnement en eau potable, élimination des déchets, assainissement pour une pratique effective du concept de développement durable et participatif.

**Sceloz, 10.11.2009, Zimbabwe**

From a third world city perspective, recognition should be given to these realities:

spatial organization (through planning) at best isolates vulnerable sites, but with most settlements (e.g more than 85% in Ethiopia) developing/evolving outside the plan, planning has been disproportionately attacked while in the developed cities one cannot change even a window of a house without the municipality's authorization. Informality, though reducing formal-induced housing deficits, is grossly embedded with 'fault-lines' that increase exposure to disasters.

So I suggest the need to develop cities' capacity to follow the plan-service-build-occupy (PSBO) sequence & human development to produce skilled & healthy citizens with earning capabilities that can afford this sequence. As long as informality is imploding, urban systems' (which are man-made systems, hence depend on the design) local resilience will be a dream.

**Hayleyleck, 10.22.2009, UK**

Thank you for all the very interesting and pertinent comments raised in this debate so far. CSWL has flagged an important point in terms of the need for developing countries to learn from the experiences of the developed world and to pursue development paths underpinned by sustainable development principles from the outset, whilst also accounting for the particular dynamics of local contexts. Added to this, newly developing cities also have the opportunity to incorporate considerations of existing and likely climate change impacts into new development policies and plans.

One central argument that has not been emphasised yet in relation to sustainable development and adaptation to climate change is the need to consider rural and urban areas together due to the multiple linkages between them. It would be interesting to hear some examples of local municipalities that are actively beginning to take this more holistic view and developing initiatives that account for and strengthen these linkages. On the other hand, it is also important to consider the specifics of urban contexts that influence the scale of both risk and vulnerability, particularly with regards to climate change adaptation and mitigation plans.

**DSimon, 10.11.200, UK**

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**Bwomezi, 11.11.2009, Uganda**

That is great Simon. As a Population Statistician, I agree with you in your response and i continue to learn from your important ideas in this debate. It is true most middle and



developed countries like China and others have benefited from population growth and mobility and indeed reversed the direction of population flow as you mentioned. I think it is because they command a relatively skilled population and on top of that their economies are widely developed. They have done a great job to extend social services to almost all regions of the state and somehow people sit and work from home because they have internet and electricity. However this is not the case with developing countries, Uganda inclusive. Over 40% of Uganda's population is not able to read and write and this is the population which is ever migrating to Kampala for casual jobs and petty trade. As a result Kampala is becoming too small for everybody and currently a city which was designed for 1 million people has more than 3 million. This rapid flow of population has put pressure on little available resources mainly roads, environment housing among other. To attain Sustainable Urbanization, the government needs to put in place a population policy that puts into consideration the current and future population trends in urban areas above all fostering instruments that provide wellbeing of that population. I suggest Globalization and industrialization among others.

**Harunapam, 11.11.2009, Nigeria**

Inequitable access to land is one of the issues that impact negatively on inclusive sustainable urbanization. One of the ways of tackling this problem is by ensuring uniform affordable (pro-poor) pricing of residential land in cities. This can be achieved by making provisions for very small land holdings, e.g. 15m x 15m in certain parts of cities. However, so as to guard against the formation of slums, government should either completely write-off or heavily subsidize the infrastructure and services provision component of land costs in high density residential areas. Furthermore, so as to guard against land speculation, land holdings in such areas should be limited to a maximum of 30m x 30m per family. Also, government must ensure a continuous supply of such high density serviced plots especially so as to accommodate the increasing demand at all times.

**Fineman, 11.11.2009, Nigeria**

In sustaining urbanization a new strategic plan has to be followed: the strategic component is driven by an ambitious vision and a robust road map for sustainable urbanization. With half of humanity living in urban areas as of the end of 2007, this is a vision of a world where all can gain access to decent housing, clean water and basic sanitation.

It is also a vision of a world where humanity can engage in its social, economic and cultural pursuits without compromising the ability of future generations to do so, in an increasingly and rapidly urbanizing world, such a vision and road map are critical to the attainment of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals.

After much consultation during the year with its partners at every level, UN-HABITAT reached the conclusion that this vision is realistic and achievable because the road map for the implementation of the plan is guided by the principle of enhanced partnership, and not by the capacities of the United Nations or of UN-HABITAT alone.

In short, the vision of sustainable urbanization is an achievable one, it is achievable because the plan builds on the growing realization of the international community that urbanization, despite all of its chaotic manifestations, represents a unique opportunity – a positive force – that can and must be harnessed to support economic growth and social advancement in a globalizing world economy.

Said by: Enohuwa . F. Obamwonyi. As: Fineman.

**DSimon, 11.11.2009, UK**

Bwomezi has again raised the argument in favour of a population policy for countries like Uganda. Governments and donors, international agencies like UNFPA, and various NGOs at different levels, spent decades debating and experimenting with various categories of population policy. Most such programmes have ultimately not been successful because they have been very difficult to enforce and because many people resent what they feel is intrusion into very personal decisions. Only with draconian force and enforcement is it seemingly possible to do something like this - China's one-child policy being the obvious example.

Increasingly, the balance is moving in favour of promoting health (especially maternal and infant/child) and supporting sustainable livelihoods on the basis that as incomes rise and child mortality falls, people reduce the average number of children and the cost of raising them increases through monetisation of economies. Indeed, if you look at time series data on total fertility rates (TFRs) over the last 30-40 years (which you can find in the annual State of the World's Population reports from UNFPA or in the UNDP's annual Human Development Reports, you will see that TFRs have been falling everywhere - even countries like Kenya which for a long time were claimed to have the highest almost anywhere. The rate of decline varies among countries and over time, and may be slower than you would like, especially because conditions in sub-Saharan Africa have lagged behind other world regions overall.

PS: in case anyone is unsure what the TFR is, this is defined as the average number of children that a woman will bear during her lifetime (which, in practice, means while she is of childbearing age).

#### **PatGreen, 12.11.2009, Jamaica**

I considered Hayleyleck's request for specifics of urban contexts that influence the scale of both risk and vulnerability, particularly with regards to climate change adaptation and mitigation plans. If I were to argue for us in the Caribbean to begin to employ generally, sustainable urbanization, I would argue for our governments to give incentives for revitalization of some of our existing urban housing districts. Instead, our governments continue to encourage development of new housing areas that only help to increase vulnerability and heighten the effects of climate change, even against the advice of the professionals. Furthermore, the existing urban housing stock continues to await incentives for revitalization and in many cases are left vacant and susceptible to squatting. Incentives for urban housing are appearing within marginal environments or agricultural lands (old sugar lands).

Case in point is the Portmore development in Jamaica that has now mushroomed into a dormitory city of Kingston and within recent years attained city status with its own mayor. Initially, the professionals had ran the figures to show the government that within the city of Kingston were pockets of then good existing housing stock within proximity to transportation systems and common utilities including in some cases, central sewerage systems. It was shown at the commencement of this development area that the housing numbers could have been matched without adding new housing stock elsewhere. Instead, the development proceeded despite the revelation of the high risk of environmental vulnerability from tidal waves and flooding in hurricanes, and especially earthquakes on these reclaimed lands around the harbour.

Today, we now are witnessing commuter traffic requiring the erection of major highways and bridges with toll payments for access to and from this "new city" with increasing traffic congestions that only add to the effects of climate change. Continuously challenged with public services and communication systems, planning that omitted hospitals and adequate institutional facilities, and the list could go on, this community has to be one of the first to employ evacuation procedures and live with the constant dread of pending natural disasters in this heightened season of vulnerability in the Caribbean.

Whereas it may be argued that the housing solutions for the developments in this area have been extremely innovative in the provision of "affordable housing" for a variety of income groups including the poor, and I personally commend some of them, I would suggest that the price that our nation has paid in the Portmore development by compromising sustainable urbanization is that the citizens suffer.

#### **Minfegue, 12.11.2009, Cameroon**

Inclusive Sustainable urbanization passes only through integrated approaches. Urban space is a set where there are four main areas / issues (I think): Urban Governance (with emphasis on the participation of vulnerable groups), economic and social development and social housing (this partly because of its strategic importance in the urban space must be disconnected from all major "economic and social development"), management of urban environment. It is therefore important for achieving an urbanization inclusive and sustainable to include actions arising in an integrated framework, the key being that the

shares in these sectors are in a dynamic complementarity rather than divergence.

Very often in our developing countries, actions and programs are scattered in all directions and do not fit logic integrated with the consequences: poor distribution of land, political empowerment of vulnerable groups inefficient, degradation urban space ... The approach seems absurd but this concept of "inclusive sustainable urbanization", the ideal would be up to citizens to participate (by different processes) in the affairs of the city, have a comfortable socioeconomic status, have access to decent housing and basic services and live in a environment healthy and well constructed ... because the ultimate goal of sustainable urbanization inclusive is the full development of the urban citizen ...

This is just my own reflexion and contribution.

#### Cyriel, 12.11.2009, Ghana

Cities do not exist in a vacuum; they exist in mutual relationship with the countryside, depending on the latter for food suppliers and additional population. In turn the town stimulates economic growth in the tributary region, either through the supply of relevant capital and other goods and services which it may provide directly or obtain through imports. Inferring from this, cities play a vital role in regional development and economic growth, hence engendering inclusive sustainable urbanization. As Reissman puts it, "industrial urban development in the West and in the underdeveloped countries today is the same process although greatly separated in time and place"

Though there have been some counter opinions by leading proponents on the biases of dialectical opposite interpretation of the history of urbanization in the underdeveloped countries: the colonial city developed ... as a centre of commerce and administration, rather than industrial production. It originated as a means whereby the metropolitan rulers established a base for the administration of the countryside, and the exploitation of its resources, and consequently the transfer of the surplus extracted from the countryside to the metropolis. At the same time, the city itself engaged in parasitical extractions of a surplus from the countryside.

It is, however, arguable that it is not just urbanization but a particular kind of urbanization that is related to national development and economic growth leading to inclusive sustainable urbanization.

Ending inequality is perhaps the greatest global challenge of the twenty-first century. And it is one that concerns all nations, since in a globalised world, poverty and suffering do not remain confined within borders, but spill over in a form of migration.

A prerequisite for inclusive sustainable urbanization is a strong commitment from the political leadership, independent media, and a strong network of civil society organizations.

#### Namraj, 13.11.2009, Nepal

Different terms are used for urban areas to plan and develop. Industrial city, commercial city, tourist city, historical city etc.

Recent terms are Healthy city, sustainable city, Eco city, livable city, Visionable city etc.

Sometimes local municipalities say that they are confused which city [model] to follow. In fact these are the theme of the urban development. All are equally important. Local planners can think about all while doing plans.

Healthy city: Looks all kind of city planning from health point of view that includes physical, mental and social. This concept aims to include health agenda in physical, social, environmental and economic plan of the city. I have not been to healthy city so far; maybe Switzerland is an example.

Sustainable city: Generally, in developing country city sustains in a worst condition. Here people saying while saying sustainable city will have good city in mind.

Eco city: Cities in general work against ecosystems and contribute more carbon in the environment. But there is still scope for minimizing the carbon emissions. Eco city aims to

minimize emission of carbon. For me Singapore looked like a eco city. i was confused whether the city was developed in a jungle or jungle was created within city.

Liveable city: This theme aims to improve quality of life

Visonable city: This city aims to develop in such a way that it is familiar to tourist in a single day. For me Malaysia was very visonable.

### Cyriil, 20.11.2009, Ghana

There may seem to be a strong association between the level of urbanisation and the level of economic development at different levels of spatial resolution, global continental and national. On a global scale, it is the most advanced industrialized regions of the world such as North America, Western Europe and Russia which are also the most urbanised. Africa, least developed also has some of the lowest levels of urbanisation.

Within each continent it is the most urbanized regions that also have the highest levels of development. Africa is no exception to this general rule as South Africa and North Africa group of countries which are more urbanized also have the most advanced development of productive forces.

In Ghana, for instance, the physical quality of life index shows great regional and rural-urban disparities within regions. The Northern Sector consisting of Northern and Upper Regions, stands out as the poorest in both their urban and rural areas. The greater Accra Region dominates by the capital district of Accra having the highest quality of life for its urban population followed by the Ashanti and Western Regions which contain the other industrial growth nodes of Kumasi and Secondi-Takoradi.

Accra, with a considerable number of the total population has the most diversified economy in the country and contributes between 15 and 20 percent of GDP, as a result of specialization and division of labour together with the economics of scale and agglomeration and the proximity of labour, capital markets and technology, larger cities tend to be engines of economic development even when they have poor linkages with their regions.

To engender inclusive sustainable urbanisation, governments, development agencies, civil society organizations, Private sector and the citizenry must develop the mechanism through which cities can interact with their wider region for the following:

1. Labour migration;
2. Flow of capital;
3. Diffusion of entrepreneurial and consumer innovations;
4. Commodity flows or rural-urban terms of trade;
5. Regional ecological footprint of towns and cities.

These can either generate development in the wider region or induce negative impact on development.

There is however some synchronism between Ghana's urbanization process and societal transformation as our urbanisation process is more demographic rather than economic and social. Not only have we failed to industrialise but we have also made a transition from agriculture to a service economy characterised by petty trade based on imported manufactured products that are made available through external loans and grants which are keeping the economy artificially afloat. At the same time the rural population continues to increase whilst the technology of production is still based on extensive agriculture, which depends on the hoe, cutlass and dibble stick as principal tools. This cannot provide a basis for successive sustainable urbanization and development.

To mitigate this ominous trend there should be a renewed emphasis on smallholder agricultural development especially in the staple food sub-sector to reduce rural poverty, increase incomes and thereby increase the demand for manufactured products in the urban areas.

Cities should be the focal centres for machine tool production and the transformation of

agricultural raw materials into processed goods. This positive feedback will create the basis for inclusive sustainable urbanisation and development.

For inclusive sustainable urbanization to be prudent, it has to be visible in the overall quantity of life of the vast majority of the population, in other words, it must not exclude the majority and should be based on the creation of a domestic market for goods and services produced locally.

Promote, strengthen and develop national self-reliance and self-sufficiency, particularly in economic, management as well as in production.

**Marilia Bernardes, 20.11.2009, Portugal**

I would like to ask why in the UN-Habitat discussion it is not considered to debate to find solutions to keep people from migrating to urban centers and creating a "metropolis".

I heard a top director from the EU [European Union] stating that metropolitanization was irreversible and there was nothing to do about, other than try to mitigate its social and environmental bad factors/impacts. All the important advances in human life quality were achieved by someone that was convinced that nothing is impossible. There are policies and actions to de-develop that not even can lower/stop this migration as even change it the way back and promote a more balanced distribution of mankind in the world. Our organization is promoting within its affiliates this debate and approval to support for the next two years actions contributing to this issue. I consider UN Habitat forum the ideal place to discuss it and would like to know about recent ongoing activities on this behalf.  
Marilia

**Adel Yasseen, 21.11.2009, Egypt**

Sustainability - to my understanding now - is that the "Quality of Urban Life" could be the scale upon which one selects the human needs and considering - in the mean time- the capabilities of the urban area. Continuity, collective consciousness, and collective conscience are the basic context for the community to adopt the urban form needed. Eleven indicators are the guides for considering the quality of urban life. Happiness and satisfaction of/for the community are the main goals for better life. That means for sure the "good" for the "NOW" and for the "FUTURE" generations.

Feedback from the members of the community needs to be considered after each of the phases applied in the "urbanisation" implications.  
Sustainability for urban areas means - to me - certain topics such as: Energy, Solid waste, Climate Change, Transport, Drinking Water, street directions (north-south, east-west), Urban Agriculture.

**Daliavg, 21/11/2009, Mexico**

Hi! Thank you for let us participate and share our opinions in this space.

I'd like to talk about a very important matter in my country which is Mexico, irregular settlements and the decision making of the government to prevent future disasters, the fast growing population and the environment impact that big cities in Mexico have suffered.

This is a subject that has not been valorised by authorities, because the situation in which we are living since a long time ago is precarious and unstable. They consider and rank other issues as more important than irregular settlements in areas with high levels of vulnerability or high risk. In Mexico, a country with up to 100 million inhabitants, with 54,3 persons per km<sup>2</sup> average, the housing deficit has become a huge problem.

On the other hand, in Mexico City, according to official registers, there were irregularities in the urban growth, increasing 41% of population over a period not exceeding 20 years. Even there are complete colonies considered as irregular human settlements.

It's important to mention that in an undeveloped country with economic issues, the desire of becoming a property owner without the property deed, is another consequence of irregular settlements because the risk of getting an unsafe place, without basic services and inhuman conditions intensifies when it has been sought by illegal means. There are also programmes to give housing to low-resourced people, although this just

gives a temporary solution.

Law forbids irregular settlements, but not the irregular development of grow per se, an infallible way to make people conscious. It's the practice of simulacrums in risk zones and to know what to do in case of disaster not excluding any social status. After all, obtaining good results is a consequence of having a good planning strategy, a participation with commitment and, more than all, prevention.

#### **WomenInCitiesIntl, 23.11.2009, Canada**

Hello all,

I would like to reiterate that the concept of sustainability necessitates three equally important components - the economy, the environment, and the social sphere. Within each of these components, actors must not only consider their potential impact on each of these spheres, but on different stakeholders within the spheres. In particular, I would like to draw your attention to the need to consider the economic, environmental, and social impacts of city structure and policy on women and girls.

I would like to explicitly state that I do not consider all women's and girls' needs to be the same. However, I do think that women and girls have needs that are distinct from those of men and boys. Considering that women and girls make up half of our population, no policy or action can be counted as sustainable without direct response to the needs of both genders. Those policies and actions that are undertaken without gendered consideration are likely to fail at least half of the population at some time or another, necessitating new action and new policy. Until this cycle is broken, our environments, our economies, and our social spheres will remain fixed upon short-term and unrealistic solutions.

### **Improving Local Resilience in Cities**

#### **Jlea, Australia 03.11.09**

I guess it will be obvious to many but the point I have been making for several years now is that the ability of cities to obtain sustainable development of a resilient kind depends to a considerable extent on acquiring resilient delivery systems. There are some urban communities in the Pacific where success in this regard has been achieved and many others where it has not. Thus it may be necessary to concentrate on first gaining certain preconditions that have been shown to typify the more successful cities prior to jumping in and trying to change/reform the existing scenario elsewhere. I'm pretty sure the same applies to other world regions too though the priorities and conditions may differ.

For example, If there are no local champions prepared to advocate the kinds of changes necessary to attain resilient development the job becomes incomparably harder than if there are some key people present. How does one mobilise people to fill this role? What incentives have been shown to work? Same kind of thing applies to achieving the other preconditions too.

An assumption that influences discussion about sustainable urbanization is that current urban administrations are often not up to the job and require reform before they can be expected to perform adequately. Cities in various parts of the world have a mixed record in this regard. In the island Pacific for example there appear to be several preconditions necessary for serious urban reforms to occur. Among them are: first, where there is a presence of political will and ownership leading to the support of local stakeholders; second, in virtually every successful example it is government and financial agencies that have initiated the reform (often with valuable support from civil society); third, it is the countries that have already achieved modest levels of economic growth and had some success in environmental management that appear best able to implement the reform agenda. There may well be other preconditions more important than this elsewhere and I'd be interested to hear what they are.

#### **Bwomezi, Uganda 03.11.09**

Thank you Simon, I am from Uganda and I welcome this important debate. Uganda has taken good steps towards improving local resilience through setting up of disaster



preparedness plan to achieve disaster resilience for vulnerable communities so as to achieve sustainable development. among steps done include establishment of emergency funds to support preparedness and recovery and protecting people living in risky areas against natural disasters like floods and land slides mostly those living near susceptible areas like near volcanic mountain slopes. the ministry has also put across Funding for Preparedness and Response and weather fore cast stations.

### **JNBona Phillipines 03.11.09**

Looking into the various key questions

My greetings to all. Please let me share our experiences and views to the laid-out questions:

Improvement of local resilience. Local resilience is seemingly analogous to the capacity to sustain in the midst of adversities, or crisis. So far the predominating crisis in the world at present is global climate change. Sustainability is likewise the ability to produce efficiently and effectively within the bounds of actual needs of the population, and the regenerative capacity of the local resources.

In our experiences with the SCP-LEPM project city-wide consultations in 1999 the more outstanding impressions were the environmental management related issues and concerns. These were seen directly related to sustainable development of the city. Indeed, there were demonstration activities and projects initiated in addressing priority environmental issues. However, there was one very understated impression; the counter opposing interest, and priorities among the citizens, and local political leaders.

My sincere apologies, I would like to make everyone aware that in my participations I would constantly raise the political leadership angle as a strategic platform.

In urban setting as political reality, the people as stakeholders would constantly raise issues and concerns that relates to sustainable development of their city. And generally these issues are anchored on environmental. This is the primary reason we cannot isolate sustainable development from environmental issues. On the contrary in political leadership there are some priority issues and concerns we can identify generally these are: 1) access to and tenure of power; 2) accumulation of wealth, and 3) legacy. These political interest were possibly one of the reasons why despite of the raised awareness of environmental issues and concerns among the populace, administrative reactions seemed quite slow and low – until such environment priorities became political issue in local governance through the courtesy of calamities or disasters, specially when reported with a large number of people dead, or millions of worth of properties damaged. Another sign of such low political interest among local administrators is the low prioritization of environmental or climate adaptation projects manifested through lack of funds, priority towards infrastructure, and other socio-political grants. There could be some policy support issued yet these directions people generally complaint of 'lack of political will!'

In every forum central to sustainable urban governance such as these, we are always deluged with issues whose character fundamentally revolve over administrative apathy among government decision makers. Looking back into the recap made by the moderators of the e-dialogue on "Bridging the Urban Divide", the most fundamental and common thread among urban sustainability issues primarily rely on the government action. In our experience for the past 8 years, the citizens as stakeholders, after heightened awareness, were always ready to participate in the process of achieving urban resilience through environmental sustainability of the city. And what generally remained as obstruction is the seemingly lack of intensified participation of political leadership. It is a fact that no public developmental issues will be ever effectively addressed without a supportive political decision. So far after years of observations in the world of urban development there are two dimensions or major considerations we have identified to effectively and successfully implement development measures towards social change (environmental urban governance, sustainable urban development, resilient cities, Climate Change Adaptation, etc.); a) civil societies - the initiation, structuralization, integration of developmental demands (issues) into political mainstream, and b) political leadership -taking opportunity of the local political leadership dynamics (vested interest). Ironically, most integration of demands into political mainstream is attributed to occurrence of disaster or calamities –

when someone dies.

Relentless advocacy and mobilization of champions. Encouragements to have city-wide public consultation is truly effective to identify multisectoral public demands and priorities but, can hardly be sustainable because other than the sponsoring UN agencies (UNDP/UNCHS/UNEP etc) many LGUs would hesitate conducting such large scale public consultative meetings due to requisite large amount of cost. What remained financially viable is the continuous advocacy of influential small environmental groups, and identifying some champions in the legislative bodies such as the city council, and in the barangay government units. And these measures can only be done to selective capacity building activities; conventions, seminars, diplomatic visits, and public presentations. In our city, there was only 2 years of continuous LEPM demo project activities supplemented with series of sectoral consultative seminars (1999-2001). The rest of the political adjustments were shouldered by respective barangays government units being the frontliners of local government services.

Engagement of community. Public Participation is actually the easier part thorough broadbased city-wide consultations (as in EPM Process). Even at the political area, when everyone appreciates the objectives of the activity, everyone extends active participation and support (For the urban poor; as long as it does not significantly adversely affect their daily income generation capacity by taking time and so much efforts).

Reducing impacts to the urban poor. In the course of events, and taking hindsight to the various disasters our country and people suffered, these two strategies are outstanding: a) urban planning at the macro-level supplemented by public consultations and social acceptability, and integration of climate changer into political mainstream. However, these requirements is warranted by a) the Environmental Clearance Policies of the national government and certain environmental codes; b) by Republic Act 9729 otherwise known as the Climate Change Act of 2009. What remains wanting in our technocrats however, is substantial experience, exact knowhow, and sincerity to pursue public welfare over and above monetary considerations.

Complementarities. This dimension depends on the people concerned. In our common experience, adaptation integrates the considerations of mitigations before the need or crisis occurs. Though mitigation requires distinct type of preparation as in disaster management (particularly environmental), the risk of exposure to damages and sufferings from man-made disasters can avoided through adaptive planning.

Trade-offs avoidance. There is no need to create nor encounter social cost in mitigating crisis situations when adaptive planning is adequately employed. Is it is unavoidable it has the least possible cost. In the case of widespread Oct 2009 flooding in Metro Manila, and in Luzon in general, deaths from drownings could have been avoided when people were strictly not allowed to reside at the riverbanks, and at the floodplains.

Vulnerability reduction. Measures for vulnerability reduction can be applied all the times when related policies are integrated or institutionalized into the political mainstream. The Solidwaste Management Act, Clean water Act, Clean Air Act, RA 9729, etc. are few of our examples. These measures can only be installed locally by legislative acts, Administrative Orders, Executive Orders, Ordinances, etc. And these developments can only be, likewise, attained through relentless advocacy of concerned citizens champions. May it be individuals, groups, governments, or political leadership. In summary, through continued capacity building of the whole community.

### **03.11.09. Felixolorunfemi, South Africa**

Improving local resilience in cities is very crucial especially the third world in the face of the increasing incidence of weather-related disasters which the predicted climate change impacts would worsen. In Nigeria for instance, owing to rapid urbanisation, the scale which has never been witnessed before, there is now an amplification of disasters in terms of the number of people that are affected. An important finding in a Nigerian study in a city now frequently plagued by rainstorm is that even the indigenous coping mechanisms employed by the poor may become less effective as increasingly fragile livelihood systems struggle to withstand disaster shocks. Also, many of these long-term trends are rendering indigenous coping strategies less and less effective and thus are increasing the vulnerability of the



poor. The major reason for this include poverty, weak infrastructure and living in marginal lands, among others. An important dimension to this in my case study is that sometimes cultural values/tradition also play a role in the acceptability of intervention measures. For example, some indigenous people refuse to use building materials that could withstand rainstorm/windstorm, and are totally opposed to the idea of moving from their present locations. Some of these factors often work against policies aimed at improving resilience among people and therefore has to be factored into development and/or adaptation programmes and policies.

#### **Minfique, Cameroon, 03.11.09**

Greeting to everyone.

I am interested in the question of the vulnerability of poor to environmental impacts. This question is closely related to the concept of risk depends on the vulnerability of the poor to environmental hazards. This vulnerability is usually because the socio-economic groups can not afford to settle in areas without risk or protect themselves against hazards such as floods (due to heavy rains ...). also it is repeated often enough it must work on the socio economic empowerment of urban poor. However at the base, there is need for serious planning tools that allow zoning of urban space with identification of risk areas therefore unsuitable for development, this view is strongly influenced by the situation here in Cameroon. In Yaounde, the major risk is that of flooding. Populations are generally victims of the poor who were unable to obtain viable spaces: it is their level of life that pushes the bottomlands and other wetlands. Underlying this problem, we never really had a zoning plan for the city of Yaounde with identifying areas at risk. In addition, emphasis should also be placed on educating these populations. It may seem absurd, but in protecting the poor against urban environmental hazards planning tools and awareness are important.

#### **JNBona 03.11.09 Philippines**

Reading various responses in this forum, the resilience of a community against global environmental change and climate variability can be viewed in many dimensions: a) property (home, water source, etc.), b) livelihood (employment, work, business, etc.) c) health (immunity, epidemic, susceptibility, transmission etc.), social web (family, associates, partners, etc.), d) public facilities (infrastructure, utilities, generation, basic services, etc.) and e) technology (planning, production, etc.). However, one obvious commonality among these dimensions remains on risk prevention and disaster management. As we learned from experiences of other countries, one core problem in terms of resilience is the plight of the urban poor which are generally located in blighted areas, environmentally critical areas, and all other types of disaster prone areas.

It is obvious that when a natural calamity particularly typhoon, flood, or earthquake strikes heavily, all the abovementioned physical and economic dimensions of resilience (properties, livelihood, health, social web, and public facilities) are devastated. It is common people would complain about local government deficiencies in land use planning, poverty alleviation, resettlement and low-cost housing, job tenure, gender sensitivity, etc. and would require to integrate this issues into the process of climate adaptation and resilience building. It is also undeniable that building up resilience requires measures that mitigate the above demands. However, on the other hand, taking an assessment and real-world consideration over the seemingly callousness of the government sector over the above said deficiencies. Active delivery of such required resilience measures appears close to impossible.

Let us examine the existing issues and obstacles of implementing a low cost housing project for the urban poor as an example: 1) Generally all appropriately situated lands in the urban areas are privately owned; 2) The local government can buy but cannot dispense at a loss, or grant (at no cost) local government owned lands on the basis of government auditing laws. In our country, the penal code prevents such measures on the grounds of malversation; 3) because the expropriation is based on tax rates, or zoning values. The private owners would prefer to develop or subdivide commercially the land to gain more revenues and profits. If the government decided to acquire the land on the basis of fair market value, it requires funding support for land acquisition, and infrastructure development from government banks who would in return levy higher cost due to interest charges. 4) In order to make the urban poor settlement area low-cost, the government should subdivide the lands and sell to the urban poor at low cost by stretching

the instalment term over a very lengthy period of time. At this point comes in the issues of professional squatting, where poor families waive their occupancy rights/title in favor of well-off parties for a much bigger price. Another common problem is exclusivity of access to party members. Moreover, the longer the term the higher the amortization which, in totality, would entail large amounts of capital subsidy from the city government. 5) The solution on urban housing problem does not end only with resettlement or relocation projects; so far, what lies next is even far more complex and devastating to the affected families; the socio-economic dislocation (SED). This problem would even accelerate more the degree of urban poverty unless addressed outright by: a) provide sustainable transport and urban mobility, bring out the employment, market, and educational centers close to resettlement areas. 6) This fallout signifies that in effective development of relocation projects, also comes along the vast local government investment for the required dispersal of the economic infrastructure (for sustainability). With an existing city and an expansive area of urban poor blighted areas, the fact that it requires establishment of suburban or mini cities within the city, this resettlement plan and activities invite a total overhaul of the city's urban framework. 7) No matter how good are the urban planners, taking a realistic look into the financial and political capacity and dynamics (limited service term or tenure of local executives) of the local governments, this situation further suggests that it would be a much easier urban planning to build entirely new cities, than resolve the existing urban settlement problems. With this financially messy situation every government administrator or executive would always shy away from low-cost housing projects for the urban poor.

Taking a hindsight, the settlement project for urban poor would only be financially feasible if the international community financial base (particularly the World Bank) would open a facility window where funding for low cost housing development, rural irrigation projects, and micro-financing for indoor urban agriculture (greenhouse) and home/cottage industry would have special low interest rates.

#### **Shuaib, Uganda, 04.11.09**

Thanks, moderators, for the interesting discussion issues. I am enjoying the ideas coming through so far. I would like to respond directly to the posting by Bwomezi in Uganda regarding improving local resilience in cities. I applaud the move by Uganda towards disaster preparedness and the creation of an emergency fund. I think it is important to consider two approaches necessary to improve resilience and promote inclusiveness in Uganda cities.

One of the approaches is to assess vulnerability, identify future trends and restructure the development path of our cities. This requires restructuring the spatial planning and urban governance systems in the country by making plans responsive coupled with good governance to address current and future challenges. This would require medium to long term planning and strategies not for shelf but action and there is a lot of untapped local level adaptations which need coordination for scaling. These include; alternative energy technologies, waste economies, plot-level infiltration technologies to reduce runoff and flooding, productive green spaces an alternative building materials.

The second approach is the short-term measures to address climate change effects and enhance adaptation. This is because climate change effects are overlaid on top of inherent challenges of urbanized poverty, environmental degradation, institutional weaknesses, health problems and spatial development exposing communities to risks of climate change. These issues have to be dealt with and coupled with long-term measures. For example, the preparedness fund is one of such short-term response to the problem but will most likely not reduce vulnerability to flooding in Kampala. This implies recurrence of disasters with serious effects. Although it's necessary, the medium to long term measure embedded into responsive spatial planning, good urban governance would target reducing internal vulnerability that is critical to making communities resilient. For example, through the UN-Habitat SUD-Net project of Cities in Climate Change Initiative, Kampala city council has come up with a city-level pilot project to demonstrate how city authorities can respond to climate change effects and revamp the responsiveness of spatial planning to address community needs. Of course, many pilots have been implemented but one key ingredient in this initiative is the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation and mitigation into the city planning systems.

Kampala also formulated a City Development Strategy which is a framework for prioritization of key issues and sectors to make the city inclusive. Inclusive cities in Uganda require these two approaches and most importantly response from governments at all levels. Therefore institutional readiness to enhance resilience will remain a key driving factor.

#### Okumedjro 04.11.09 Togo

Hi colleagues, friends and moderators,

You're having great conversations here, some even coming up to tell about some approaches.

It is real, ,but the major cause of inadequate local resilience in our cities is a lack of empowerment programs through appropriate training for technicians of cities development. It has an overarching aim to ensure provision of skills training and capacity building in urban communities. This is a big development in a process that often moves in tiny, tiny steps and a testament to the fact that these negotiators feel that they have the political space to act boldly. The Least Developed Cities bloc, another is stepping up.

The first phase of improving local resilience involved various steps such as:

- education for sustainable development initiatives for all,
- sustainable urban development policy for planners
- strengthening physical planning process
- area spatial planning support
- responsibilities shares

By the way in Togo recently I am one of the promoters of SINURCO 2009 (International show of town planning and construction 1st edition). It is in fact a setup platform for experience exchanges and for a living dialogue with partners in order to stand solidly behind efficient transformation of the environment. The targeted goals are goods and buildings free of dangerous substances, sustainable use of energy, sustainable use of land and water, waste treatment with minimal environmental impact and a healthy indoor environment, and as you might guess, these overlap quite a bit.

#### Lampis. 05.11.09 Colombia

Hi to All, nice discussion and very good contributions!

There is a question that David rightly flagged as one of the key ones to which I would like to make a contribution:

How can we engage communities effectively in formulating adaptation plans & actions to cope with climate change and uncertainty?

Previous posts have highlighted many of the things that should be done, both by people and institutions as well as a number of relevant elements in terms of the attributes or preconditions for a more resilient city.

However, perhaps what people can be and the opportunity and freedom they should have in terms of their collective action as communities has received less attention so far in this thread.

Let me thus tell a short anecdotal story to illustrate what I intend to say. I was in the city of Tumaco last year, researching the constraints on people's livelihoods towards adaptation to Global Environmental Change (GEC). Tumaco is low-coastal city in the Colombian Pacific that is home to 160.000 inhabitants whose 65% lives on pole houses built onto the sea shore. It has a Human Development Index (HDI) of approximately 0.660 a long story of cultural, social and human rights violation as well as of ethnic and social exclusion of the 85% of its population made up by black communities. It happened that in those days a Local Committee for Disaster Prevention was taking place in the city and I was invited. Nicely dressed people, the captain of the centre for the monitoring of the Pacific Ocean, representatives of the Red Cross and the transnational corporation that has an oil refinery there, various notables and members of the municipality but...

... not a single black person, not a single representative of the community they pretend to

help.

It therefore seem to me that before thinking in a normative perspective to "how-thing-should-be-if" we ought to consider fundamental factors such as the second-hand citizenship that many communities have to cope with in developing countries and, specifically, in their urban settlements. The issues of inclusive and accountable government is therefore to me a kingly entry point to this debate.

It enriches - I hope - the discussion by compelling a risk management perspective with key insights provided by development studies in terms of institutional capacity and anthropological (I am not an anthropologist) processes related to the social construction of vulnerability and risk.

A very good night to all!

#### **Bwomezi 05.11.09 Uganda**

Thanks, Shuaib, for your contribution and great ideas. Uganda has achieved strong economic growth and macroeconomic stability over the last two decades. However, the struggle still continues, most especially improving local resilience in our towns and cities. I have found out that the issue of environment in Uganda has not been taken seriously and as a result people have lost their lives and property to floods, landslides, drought to mention but a few.

With regard to this matter of improving local resilience, observing climatic changes is one of the most important factors. Uganda needs to build up resilience of vulnerable communities to cope with climate change impact through planning and putting across energy policies that take into consideration the element of climate variations.

#### **Eddie Nsamba-Gayiiya, Uganda 05.11.09**

I am Eddie Nsamba-Gayiiya a land, housing and urban development specialist from Uganda. The discussions on Dialogue 6-Inclusive Sustainable Urbanization so far posted are very interesting.

I wish to contribute to the series of questions which were posed by Prof. David Simon and in particular:

How can cities improve local resilience?

How can we engage communities effectively in formulating adaptation plans & actions to cope with climate change and uncertainty?

How can we reduce environmental impacts on the urban poor?

Global warming and climate change are for real in Uganda today. Weather and climate-induced disasters are increasing in occurrence and severity due to global warming and climate change. The country is currently experiencing El Nino rains since two weeks ago and floods and water-borne diseases are threatening the lives of the urban poor especially in Kampala City, the capital and commercial city. Many of the urban poor and low-income groups live in flood-prone areas, mainly in swamps/wetlands, valleys and low lying areas/flood plains because they cannot afford to live in better areas. These people are vulnerable in all senses. Their vulnerability is heightened by the high levels of poverty and low coping capacities.

There are serious challenges to improving local resilience. The major factor is excessive urban poverty. The starting point is to empower the local communities through poverty reduction initiatives. The city authorities should design and implement livelihood projects, employment projects and revenue generating programmes to improve the coping capacities of these local communities. The second priority area is to provide the necessary environmental infrastructure and basic services (water and sanitation) in these flood-prone areas. Virtually all drainage channels are blocks and floor waters end in the poor people's houses which are already in poor structural condition.

Already some deaths have been reported due to floods. There are hardly any sanitation facilities to talk of in these areas. The few who are lucky have pit-latrines which get flooded causing water-borne diseases like cholera. The rest do not have any sanitation facilities at all-they use polythene bags(moving toilets).

The majority of people in these slums do not access to safe drinking water-they use spring well water which is contaminated due to poor sanitation facilities. Double jeopardy. The third priority area is community mobilization and sensitization. This includes empowering the communities to demand, as a right, equitable share of urban infrastructure and services. Early warning systems should be developed in disaster prone areas in the city-these should be developed through involvement of the local communities and thorough a combination of traditional as well as modern means of predicting events or occurrences. Information management is yet another priority area. In the last week of September, 2009 Kampala City Council put adverts in the newspapers warning of the possibility of floods, disease outbreaks and collapse of houses built in wrong places or with weak materials. The notice urged the residents to maximize proper hygiene, avoid living in lowlands, marshes or water ways. KCC also gave a map showing areas prone to flooding. Talk of a good practice.

We need to talk about climate-related disaster risk reduction before we even talk about resilience building, adaptation and mitigation to climate change. So far I have not seen anything on climate-related disaster risk reduction in urban areas and yet it is critical.

It is observed that a dollar spent in risk reduction saves more than 10 dollars. A stitch in time saves nine! What are the possible strategies? 1) City authorities should ensure that people do not settle in areas prone to floods (a tall order!). Some people have suggested proper land use planning and zoning. We are told this is missing in Nigeria. But even in urban areas in the developing world where such a measure/instrument is in place, it is not easy to implement due to a number of factors, chief among which is urban poverty (at least this is true for Kampala City. 2) City authorities should relocate and resettle the poor communities living in climate-related disaster prone areas. Many urban authorities do not have the financial capacities to do this. Kampala City Council has been talking of relocating/resettling people for the last 10 years or so but they have not provided the financial resources for compensation. 3) City/urban authorities should construct proper environmental infrastructure (drainage channels, roads, solid waste) and maintain them. Urban authorities in Uganda have miserably failed in this. 4) City/urban authorities should provide basic urban services, especially water and sanitation.

#### **Bwomezi 06 Nov 2009 Uganda**

I agree with you Eddie. I am a Ugandan and I have seen it all. Empowering communities in Uganda, mostly among the city population, to manage their risks hence improving local resilience requires a comprehensive strategy. Firstly Uganda needs strategies for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in its policies and above all to foster implementation. The community needs to be involved in preparedness for disasters and the effects of climate changes through sensitization campaigns about the effects of cutting trees and settling in disaster-prone areas. The government needs to increase the budget for concerned disaster institutions so as to increase their capacity to respond to disaster and ensure re settlement plans. Government should also work together with other departments, for example the Meteorology Department, and take their reports about weather predictions seriously.

#### **Okumedjro 06.11.09 Togo**

Since the crucible of change, a magnet for people from everywhere, the city is the laboratory of our humanity, the engine of sustainability needs be everyone's concern so it important to think about how to set up programmes to educate the public on how to go when there is change or disaster in city to prevent loss. This something we need to highlight in order to prevent people waiting on high buildings for flooding to stop, but when? This situation comes often when there is a first time effect in some community. The climate change is producing shock effects in our midst so, as a coordinator of technology for revival programmes, I promote education for sustainable development in the deprived community especially for craftsmen in Togo to strengthen thier ability to cope in case of disaster in a city.

## Environmental impacts on the urban poor

### JNBona, 04 Nov 2009, Philippines

So far most of issues raised for this debate in eForum, were related to a) advocacy, b) community mobilization and engagement, c) capacity building, d) conceptualization, e) balanced resource and development prioritization, and f) institutionalization. Indeed, all of these issues strongly related to sustainable development, **capacity building** is the only remedial action that would directly benefit the individuals. However, we can agree that the new emphasis currently, has departed from remedial mitigation to preventive adaptation towards climate change.

**Adaptation implies the acceptance of the impossibility of globally mitigating** the current trend in global warning and the recognition of the stubborn selfishness of big nations to insist generating billions of tons of carbon emission per year in the interest of their respective economies. This change in development direction leaves a self-defeating impression that the community of nations has abandoned the relentless pursuance of frontally mitigating the present global climatic problems, in favor of adaptation as the best resolve and consolation so far among less developed economics, simply to survive the onslaught of climate change.

To reduce the impact of environmental impact on the urban poor is to make them **economically productive (employment)** that they may have the **option to acquire resilient livelihood, homes secured from environmental hazards, and sustainable home life**. At first glance, this area of concern returns back to the role of **political leadership**.

What I appreciate more on the term '**resilience**' is its ease to understand than '**sustainable development**' and **less desperate than 'survival capacity'**. Interestingly making people productive or prosperous is another broad field of debate.

### Okumedjro, Togo, 05 Nov 2009

The fact that more and more people live in **cities, which are adequate places for economical growth and social cohesion then both social and economic benefit can increase together with green investments**. So it is **important to promote public-private partnership** in order to develop a concept for sustainable urban development based on technology, knowledge and experience to **link and exploit the synergies between the systems in cities** (citizens) for lowering carbon dioxide emissions, less noise and vibration, contaminated water, harmful substances and risk hazards. The **best results come when all interested stakeholders are involved** in determination objectives for reduced environmental impacts (policies and legislation, discuss in what direction the city should grow and identify the preferred economic activities that will spur this development, formulate a good urban governance strategy that will attract desired economic activities and include visionary spatial planning and land management to support it. So that all aspects of environment impact on the urban poor should be reduced in the city.

### Pat Green, Jamaica, 06 Nov 09

I am remembering the Sunday School action song about the wise man who built his house upon the rock, and the foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and the rain came tumbling down then we would swing our hands wide as "whoosh, the house came tumbling down". As this debate is taking off, I cannot help thinking about this song when as innocent children we berated the "foolish" man and tumbled down like his house.

Do we therefore say, how "foolish" are we, as professionals and administrators, when we continue to permit such types of **"foolish" construction on sand**? Indeed, in the Caribbean sand construction has become premium developments, and it would appear that the **"wise" man often is found in the poorer sectors of the society who build their houses on the rock**. Now, we are watching houses tumbling down on our television screens all over the world, and many of them were built upon the rock.

In the context of climate change **all types of construction appear to be in jeopardy, those on the sand and on the rock**. It may be argued that **vulnerability has now**



**become universal with the result that all geographic and economic sectors of city dwellers of all groups are now in need of comprehensive education on risk preparedness and disaster management. With climate change, have we surpassed risk mitigation strategies as valuable as these are?**

In the Caribbean, the frequency of hurricanes and floods added to these the possibilities of earthquakes and volcanoes I believe have created a **level playing field**. I therefore suggest that the topic of "Environmental impacts on the urban poor" may even be **an anomaly** because our experiences are showing us that not just the poor, but all **economic strata are now being impacted simultaneously**. Climate change has now, I believe, fostered urban **inclusion of all sectors requiring new strategies** for environmental sustainable urbanization.

#### Okumedjro, Togo, 06.11.09

I remember **Keta in Ghana**, where people there live with fishing and decided to live near to both the Volta and sea, occupying land little by little with **no control and for both residential and business settlement**. Year later the information came that some part are **wetland and the community** is already used to doing almost anything there so they found it difficult to leave and a few years later people were sacked by flooding and the government accommodated them. As now, the **entire community and homes are in water, both rich and poor were victims**.

#### Abubakar Sadiq 06.11.09 Nigeria

The urban poor are most(ly) vulnerable to negative impacts of the environment, because they **lack the capacity to protect themselves from negative environmental impacts caused by man's development activities**. In Nigeria the Federal Government promulgated the **Environmental Impact Assessment** law with a view to identifying the negative impacts of all proposed development projects on the environment and the communities; after the identification, mitigative measures are designed for such projects at the planning stage and if no mitigative measures are available, the proposed project shall be halted at this stage.

This Environmental Impact Assessment will **reduce negative impacts on the environment and urban poor that have no capacity to protect themselves from such impacts**.

#### Alok Tiwari 10.11.09 Ethiopia

I want to ask one question from you- the **policies and programmes** of urban poverty removal and urban environment improvement are **adequate** but why are the **results not according to the set targets**. I talk to various policy makers, ministry officials and the common people in Addis Ababa Ethiopia and found that all know the problems but there are no efforts to solve the problem Why???

#### Namraj 11.11.09 Nepal

Beautiful part of this e debate is that we are writing **seeing our own city**. Few people will go to Brazil for face to face discussion. I would like write few points on the topics seeing my own country Nepal. Here by environmental impacts I understand local environmental not that related to global environmental climate change.

Certainly the **environmental impact on the urban poor is much higher than on the urban rich**. We can minimize this difference in three ways. **First we can discourage poor to come in city, second, we can upgrade poor to rich, and third we can improve urban environment**.

**Rich** are more **responsible for polluting city than poor** do. For example rich uses **private cars** emitting gas and raising dust from dusty road. City authority does not have plan for good road and regulation for emission. Poor who do not have private car will have to take both gas and dust particles.

**Rich connects toilets to sewer**, which ultimately goes to river passing city. **Authority does not have waste water treatment system**. Poor who live in river bank as squatter, facing Dead River. These are just examples.

**People do not have to pay for pollution.** As a result, cost of living in the city becomes low. Impacts comes more to poor because they can not isolate or shield themselves from exposure.

**Solution is to charge for the pollution.** This will increase cost of all kind of facilities, which attracts people in the city. This will not only clean city also reduces differences between rich and poor.

**Environmental tax** is one way of converting **private property in to public.** Public property not only environment will benefit both rich and poor equally.

However, in country like ours people **especially rich do not like to convert private property in to public.**

#### **Potekaal, United Republic of Tanzania, 12.11.09**

**Unplanned settlements are a fact of life** in the **Municipality of Moshi, Tanzania.** They are of particular importance because they represent **70% of urban housing** stock and tend to **accommodate the most vulnerable group**, the low income households. The settlements are often in unsatisfactory locations, with conditions resulting from inadequate infrastructure services, and environmentally prone to flooding. The settlements are **often illegal**, having built with **no formal authorization or legal land tenure.**

It is noted that **physical infrastructure and services** in the settlements are either **missing or very inadequate** and in very poor conditions. Common features in these settlements are **overcrowding, poor quality housing, inadequate water supply, no provision or allowance for circulation, poor environmental conditions characterized by lack of proper sanitation, poor drainage, uncollected solid waste and importantly.**

**Among the strategies which can address the problems in the unplanned areas are** i) **Preparation and implementation of regularization and upgrading plans through a participatory approach** ii) **Facilitation of service provision** iii) **Decentralization of infrastructure provision and management to communities.** iv) **Awareness rising on the processes should be the key link.**

#### **Harunapam 13.11.09, Nigeria**

Environmental impact can result from natural occurrences which man hardly has any control over other than to adapt to them, or from human activity that is more amenable to human control.

**Equitable access to land** will ensure that the urban poor are able to secure land for housing in well planned and adequately serviced areas that are not prone to disasters. One way of achieving this is to ensure that all **urban lands are adequately planned.**

Having ensured that the urban poor have unhindered access to good serviced plots, the next thing to do is to **educate and enlighten them on best practices and requirement in land development**, and then **enforce the necessary development regulations on them.** These will surely mitigate environmental impact on the urban poor.

In many cities in developing countries there is a **high incidence of air pollution** in areas occupied by the **urban poor** resulting from the use of **firewood and charcoal for cooking.** This can be mitigated by **making fuels that emit less smoke available e.g. kerosene, cooking gas.**

Furthermore, in cities where **motorcycles are used for public transportation**, this has resulted in high incidence of air pollution in areas where the poor live especially as the motorcycle is the public urban transportation mode of choice for the urban poor.

Also, a high relative incidence of **septic tanks**, especially if construction standards are compromised, can result in **ground water pollution which may impact negatively on its potability.**

It is also necessary to ensure that proper sanitary practices are maintained especially



regarding solid and liquid waste disposal as poor practices can impact negatively of air and surface water (streams, rivers, lakes) with dire health implications. The case of the **“flying toilet”** practice in one East African country is an example [Moderator's comment: I have observed 'flying toilets' in West Africa too]; fortunately this problem has been mitigated in a very progressive manner to the economic benefit of the people.

It is also very necessary to ensure **good refuse collection and disposal practices** so as to avert blockage of drainage channels resulting in flooding in heavy rains, and also to prevent surface water pollution.

#### **Potekaal, Tanzania, 14.11**

Moshi has the **Sustainable Moshi Programme (SMP)**, which was started in 1997 is the replicate of Sustainable Cities Programme after the successful performance of our country's Sustainable Dar Es Salaam Programme. SMP applies a platform of **broad-based stakeholder participatory approaches using the concept of Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) targeting mainly the urban local authorities and their partners. This is a bottom up approach.**

Moshi had donor support from UN-HABITAT (1998-1999) and DANIDA (2002-2006), which helped in both technical capacity and investment in projects.

Moshi has 60 Mitaa (Sub wards), 30 of them are in the unplanned settlements. Using SMP up to now 3 Mitaa (Dhobi, Miembeni and Kwa Komba) have been regularized and upgraded. **Serviced provided in this process include storm water drains, skip buckets & skip pads, individual plots surveying and some are procuring title deeds.** 3 low cost toilets for training purpose have been built. **Participatory approach was used from the design of the project, during implementation and operation & maintenance.** Another Mitaa is in the similar strategic action plan of the SMP. Its implementation will enable the environmental impacts to be more controlled by the urban poor.

#### **Xena09, Kiribati, 15.11.09**

I agree with you DSimon about that topic on Effective Community Engagement. Here in **Kiribati** we just started a **new project called Sustainable Towns Project**, funded by **NZAid**. This project is **about upgrading the three urban areas in Kiribati**. We have seen lots of environmental impacts on the urban poor here in Kiribati and alot has been done to solve these environmental impacts. The problem is that **most of the projects** carried out to try and solve these environmental impacts **do not include community engagement. That is why most of them fail. Community engagement is vital to make communities feel ownership of the project and if they feel that ownership, they will look after it well.**

The team members have **evaluated past projects and realized that there was lack of community engagement in them.** That's why with this **STP, community engagement is crucial.** It's a **10 year project and along the way, community engagement is about at least 70% involvement.**

One example in Kiribati is the **landfill**. This landfill is located in the middle of two villages. Because communities are not involved from the very beginning on this project, the communities just left the landfill by itself with a view that it is governments property or job to maintain it. This landfill is in bad condition. Rubbish is scattered outside the landfill. Who will be affected by the negative effects from this landfill but these two close villages?

Therefore, community engagement is very important to employ because work will be much quicker and easier. If they feel ownership of this project they will look after it well.

STP just finished Phase 1 out of its three phases. Phase 1 involved lots of community engagement and they found that communities cooperate well with them. They get ideas on how to solve certain issues and so forth. Phase 2 will start in 2010 and from the lessons learnt in Phase 1, they will definitely involve communities.

#### **Minfiegue, Cameroon, 17.11**

Poor are fundamentally vulnerable people. By this, to reduce environmental impacts on them means to **reduce their vulnerability** and thus, in others words, to **empower them.**

**This empowerment cannot be only focused on the environmental sector but it has to be social, economic and politic, even cultural.** How can this empowerment be introduced in terms of strategies, politics or programs and projects with effective and efficient impacts? That is the real question! Our **governments in developing countries** and particularly in Sub Saharan Africa **failed in their actions** in this sense **because of non consideration of the focused target** (the poor), the non-development and implementation of local approaches (approaches adapted to local context, to local environment!)-What can the efficiency of actions of redefining the general aspect of a city like Yaounde be **through simply adopting external models if there is no adaptation of these actions within the context.** Adaptation within context means that we have to take into account the situation, the status of those who are called poor in the building of the city...-. In order to also facilitate this empowerment a real political will is needed. **In sum, reducing the environmental impact on poor will require social, economic, cultural and politic empowerment.** As JM BONA said in the debate focused on urban divide, politics (or political sector) have a central role on this process

**Gennaro, Italy, 17.11.2009**

I am writing from Italy, **Southern Italy**, and I think that **environmental impacts are active not only for the urban poor but also territorial areas in a national and international division of risk and hazardous.** For example, in **Campania, a region with about 5.5 million inhabitants, we have increasing levels of diseases and death linked to hazardous and toxic waste dumping in legal and illegal way.** **Poverty has a social but also a territorial dimension that is important to recognize in the sustainable city policies.**

**Lorenagv, Mexico, 22.11.2009**

According with the global warming that we are living these days, the major part of poor people in the world is being affected directly by this.

This problem is very notorious in my country, **Mexico**, because as all the other cities, the **effects of the global warming are increasing day by day.**

**The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean reveals a study that shows a decrease in the extent of poverty in the region between 2006 and 2008 but in Mexico.**

And the only country registered with an increasing situation in poverty was Mexico, with an increase of 3.1% between 2006 and 2008 and reflects the primary effects of economic crisis that began at the end of year.

In 2008 50.6 million Mexicans were in extreme poverty.

I could talk state by state of my city and tell the problems that they have to live with, but at the end, the **solution is in the bad planning by the government.**

We have rules that ask some regulations that are not well done, I would like to mention some of them.

Saltillo, Coahuila in the north of Mexico is a city where commercial activities are incentivised and done by train. but also its a **conflict because many people don't respect the rules about safety that indicates its forbidden loitering within 10 metres of the railtracks; there are people living just 3 metres away from this harmful line.**

Besides a lot of houses are next to the **creekland when the season of rain, arrives, all these houses fall down.**

Tabasco, a state in the south, is being affected with heavy rains and this s200 000 affected people until this day, the main activity in the town is the farming and with the rain this is all messed up, leaving 2k of lost rice yield, and 33 thousand lost cattle.

This is just one state, but I want to mention that in all the country are thousands of affected families, that live in bad zones, and of the fields, for the strong rains.

**This is a problem of the bad infrastructure that predominates in Mexico.**  
Its necessary to take care of the security of people.

**We can't fight against the environment, we have to be ready for the disasters that happened year by year.**

**The country is always ready after tragedies happen, and its necessary to be ready before it.**

In the city where I live, Monterrey, **we are trying to take responsibility for the problem** e.g. awareness raising conference  
**Risk preparedness and broad social consciousness, we must remember that doing something for our planet are making sure future us to have our future generations.**

#### **Minfegue, 18.11.09, Cameroon**

"How, under today's conditions, to produce realistic and appropriate plans that are also widely acceptable, and then to enforce them?" It is very difficult to answer this question adequately and exactly but there is some points which can allow urban managers and others stakeholders to produce "sustainable plans". These points can be:

- Inclusivity: plans should include at least a large part of wills of all people who intervene or live in urban area (poor, rich, public sector, private sector, civil society, etc)
- Participation: in order to facilitate acceptability by urban people, elaboration of plans should implicate them (urban people, particularly vulnerable people). Even if this aspect of participation can be solved through inclusivity, it is important to develop participatory approaches in the production of plans. Participation should be also visible on the control in order to enforce these plans;
- Formal and adequate framework of land management and use: in order to produce realistic and appropriate plans, land management should be adequate and properly developed. this aspect includes formalisation of institutional framework particularly (laws...) as example it exists in Cameroon an informal superposition between traditional system of management of land and modern (pseudo institutional) system in many urban areas;
- Reinforcement of the control of execution of our plan: In sub- Saharan countries, many plans have been developped but they have not been implemented. Urban people and civil society should be involved in this process of control;
- Integrated approach: Plans developed for urban areas should be adequate with if no complementary with those of urban areas because in Africa for example urban problems and dynamics have their origin in rural areas. actions in those 2 areas should be complementary in a global integrated approach;
- Integration of environmental aspects in these plans: plans should take into account environmental management: management of risks in urban areas, identification and classification of zones which are adequate for settlement, strategies for adaptation to climate change, politics of sustainable sanitation, etc;
- Explore or improve mobilizations of resources for execution of those plans: another element of the non-execution of plans in sub-Saharan Africa is the lack of resources. It can be important to explore alternatives for mobilization of resources...

Even if these elements can be so basic, they can be important in our context (in sub-Saharan Africa); The most difficult should also be the manner to convert them into operational tasks and actions.

#### **YCWU, Uganda, 18.11.2009**

Thank you all for all your contributions about this topic,

My take on this topic is that in order to improve local resilience in cities the following have to be put in place.

Local communities in cities have to get access to proper housing and income in order for them to be more resilient. There are many marginalized urban communities living in informal settlements who are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and many other social problems.

In Uganda we have a whole ministry which deals with disaster preparedness. The government puts up announcements on radio stations and all the media houses about changes in the environment and at times the communities are advised to vacate certain areas which are mostly affected by disasters. There are organisations which help in sustainable development like our organisation which I serve Youth Crime Watch Uganda.

-The authorities should start up credit institutions and credit unions which can provide the local communities access to easy loans which can be put at proper use.

-Local resilience in cities can be greatly improved if the communities are provided with empowerment and skills development and capacity building, this can help them to cope with the challenges of daily life.

- Local communities should be taught modern methods of urban farming and urban agriculture in order to enable them secure sustainable livelihoods and achieve food security.

- It is better if more jobs can be created which can easily accommodate women and Youth as they are the ones who are most affected by unemployment. It is a bit hard to improve resilience if people are unemployed so measures should be put in place to address this issue, for instance in Uganda there are many unemployed graduates living in cities.

- stopping the politicking when it comes to development, there are many policies and services which are designed to empower and help local communities in cities but they fail because of the politics. Politics should be separated from development. Local councils should do their work accordingly.

UN-HABITAT can play a big role with the help of governments and other funding bodies.

### **Solomon Tsehai Adall ,20.11.2009, Ethiopia**

Climate-related calamities or disasters due to environmental change are a serious problem in Ethiopia. The Government set its Disaster Preparedness and Prevention policy 15 years ago. Still now the policy is being applied at all regional and local levels.

It focuses on development efforts to be integrated with disaster prevention and mitigation measures and also employment creation schemes. Because of this policy, a significant change and positive result has been recorded.

Climate change problems in cities differ one from the other but in our country flood, ground water pollution, sanitation, weather changes are critical problems.

I want to be specific from my experience in Dire Dawa city. Flood, ground water pollution, climate change and sanitation problems are serious. Floods 2 and 3 years ago affected more than 20000 people through injuries, death, dislocation etc. Ground water pollution due to urban sanitation, ground water depletion due to climate change and increase annual mean temperature from year to year.

To mitigate the problem, government, NGOs and also the community work together to undertaking sustainable development.

To mobilize the community and to coordinate stakeholders' intervention at Regional level, Regional Environmental Coordinating Committee, Regional Environmental Task Force, and District or local level Environmental Coordinating committees established. Environmental policy, strategies and actions are developed and approved by all stakeholders. The strategies and actions have 10 sectoral and 10 cross-sectoral issues that integrate

environmental issues with development efforts. Each sector's development plans and projects include the environment to be part of the activities. By these actions, community mobilization on afforestation at school, in public areas at mountains, at different compound and houses etc have been undertaken; conservation work like terracing and check dam construction have been undertaken. In order to prevent the ground water pollution at local level, community sanitation committees have been established; public toilets, communal latrines and individual latrine have been forced by law to use septic tanks in order to prevent pollute water percolation. In order to prevent the flood hazards, watershed management has been exercised within urban and surrounding rural areas (catchment rehabilitation).

For sustainable development, participatory integrated planning will be vital.

### **Tanya Layne, 20.11.2009, South Africa**

The Edith Stephens Wetland Park in Cape Town was planned into the Lansdowne-Wetton Road transport / economic corridor as a site of potential environmental, social and economic significance in the 1980s. It's 37 hectares and includes a seasonal wetland and a stormwater detention pond. Part of the seasonal wetland had been donated to Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden in the 1950s as it contained a narrowly endemic plant, the *isoetes capensis*.

The whole of the Cape Flats was once a mosaic of dunes and wetlands, but is now where Cape Town's industry and poorest communities are located. So every winter hundreds of people living in informal settlements lose their homes to flooding - and that's before the impacts of climate change. Some years the major roads that border the park flow like rivers. This gives an understanding of how much worse the situation would be if the wetland was not there at all, and why it is important to save all the wetlands in the City.

But the park has become a community asset in many other ways too. First, the restoration of degraded land in the park was planned with the surrounding communities of Philippi, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Manenberg, Hanover Park. These communities were previously divided by Apartheid as 'Coloured' and 'African', and physically by a railway line. So just bringing them together in planning and implementation was an act of community building that can only improve resilience. This was celebrated through a community festival commemorating 50 years of the park in 2005.

Many education activities take place at the Park's environmental centre, housed in a restored farm house on the site. And it hosts a local NGO that trains maths and science teachers, contributing to the integration of environmental education into the curriculum. It participates in a range of youth development activities and provides youth with training and an avenue to develop themselves through volunteering on practical projects in the Park.

The Park has contributed to peace building by serving as a neutral venue for peace talks between notorious rival gangs in the neighbourhood. It also hosts drug counselling workshops and Park staff provide fun environmentally educational activities for the children of adults attending the workshops. It has played a role in health and wellness promotion by hosting exercise and wellbeing programmes in partnership with local clinics and an NGO addressing Tuberculosis.

It has an amphitheatre that was created from rubble cleared when the site was restored, and is working with local businesses to establish a stage for community concerts. Community partners of the Park hope that this will serve as a stimulus for local and international tourism to the broader community, and already many 'township' tours include a stop at the Park for light relief and inspiration.

The ecosystems at the Park are being restored through engagement with national government's Working for Water alien clearing and Working for Wetlands restoration initiative. These programmes provide temporary employment and skills development opportunities to the most impoverished from the surrounding communities at the same time as achieving their environmental goals.

Fundraising efforts are underway to establish an indigenous horticulture and lifeskills

training college at the Park that will see unemployed youth played in jobs in the growing indigenous landscaping and nursery industry after a year's learnership.

The above is just a sample of the kinds of things that can be achieved if urban wetlands are appropriately conserved with communities and for their benefit.

**JNBona, 23.11.2009, Philippines**

I do agree on the point of Jlea. Indeed, one of possible important preconditions in supporting the achievement of the goal of every endeavor is the substantial understanding of the local political and cultural context of the target community.

Jlea appeared to have taken a good grasp of the actual workings of community or urban development. So far he has taken note of a very important (if not crucial) but least considered factor of global advocacy - local champions. These people as I have observed were citizens who were vocal, active, and resilient advocates for the principles of sustainable development (good governance, gender equality, climate change, environmental conservation, urban greening, etc.). Some of them are ordinary electorates, some hold social leadership in the neighborhood, some are key personalities of NGOs, some hold key, or influential positions in the local government, some were invisible 'navigators of local governance future' (advisers, or technical assistants (some are drafters of proposed legislations) or powerful political personalities. I do not know how UNCHS could develop a system to formally identify, cultivate, support and maximize the utilization of these very actively powerful political energies. In my observation focusing support to these committed persons is almost equivalent to 'driving' the whole city.

**How can we engage communities effectively?**

**Claudia Vargas, Bolivia, 06.11.09**

Definitely, the engagement of communities is vital for a sustainable city. In UN-HABITAT projects in periurban areas in Bolivia, it seems more difficult to have community participation since dwellers are concentrated in their economic activities (often surviving with waste recycling and street vending). Also the community associations typical from rural areas are weakening in the periurban context. So, more creativity and incentives are needed to involve communities.

A first step is to raise awareness about urban issues (infrastructure, services, security, etc.) and to develop a sense of ownership of the city physical space. There is also a need to promote a Citizenship Culture in local schools and community associations. Then, the communities start to feel belongers of the city.

For instance, several slums were upgraded in the city of La Paz and the inhabitants did not have a sense of ownership of the improved neighbourhoods. Additionally, the new water services installed changed their consumption patterns and therefore, the project had to include an awareness campaign about climate change impact and other activities to engage communities in a more dynamic and participatory way.

**PatGreen, Jamaica, 09.11.09**

Indeed, for Sustainable Development there would need to be a more inclusive participation, which should include effective community participation and involvement in governmental and professional strategies. Interesting examples have emerged through the use of local radio and television media, especially "talk shows" as a community tool that has proven to be most effective during natural disasters especially for the most vulnerable.

It has been very interesting to observe the involvement of the radio stations throughout the recent spate of hurricanes that have been occurring in our Caribbean region. Campaigns before and during the seasons have resulted in a more broad-based education of these communities, in "high" and "low" risk zones, with the mobilization of volunteers and shelter managers under the guidance of national disaster agencies. Motor vehicles with microphones have been used to drive through communities to advise persons of shelters, and evacuation procedures, and when systems fail and areas become impassable, working cell phones to radio stations united communities and helped to keep these updated, as well as to help to dispatch rescue and emergency teams as necessary.



This media then became the source for community connections to agencies to help bring about improvement in disaster management strategies. Communities had a "voice".

**Derrickhf, US, 10.09.09**

I firmly disagree that urban areas are artificial. It is simply a matter of perspective. It is amazing to see how people learn to live with one another and, increasingly, with their environment in a very natural way.

Increasingly, cities are centers of connectivity for all people. Over 50% of the world is urban, most of those people are poor. Our best chance for empowerment is through giving people an outlet for their creativity and their views, a real chance to participate in government. This is, of course, easier said than done.

As an urban planning student in Seattle, WA, I see how we give lip-service to the idea of participation, but we still have failed to find a model that brings all people of different ages, genders, ethnicity, income, etc in for a truly diverse planning process. There are many accounts of how including different people in the planning process reaches different results. I would argue that the only way to be effective is to include everyone. I still do not know how, though.

**Okumedjro, 09.11.2009, Togo**

Hi colleagues, friends and moderators,

La diffusion de bonnes pratiques est une des méthodes qui permet de faire progresser le développement durable par l'exemple. Mais aucun exemple ne peut être transféré et généralisé sans un travail d'adaptation et de traduction. Pour le faciliter, il faut identifier les facteurs de succès ou d'échec (potentiels), et les partenariats qui ont permis le succès. Des initiatives internationales et des réseaux de compétences se mettent en place pour assurer l'identification et le transfert de ces expériences (ONU- HABITAT, UNESCO, UNEFPA ...).

Bonnes pratiques, histoires à succès, études de cas on trouvera sur les sites de ses partenaires des liens qui illustrent la variété des initiatives et des expériences qui concourent à la mise en œuvre concrète du développement durable.

A Lomé nous avons initié cette année un cadre d'échange de tous les acteurs de développement urbain et des promoteurs de l'environnement "Salon International de l'Urbanisme et de la Construction (S.IN.UR.CO 2009)". Il a permis d'avoir des séries de débat sur le thème: "Nos villes, Notre Environnement et Nous..." pendant lequel beaucoup de découvertes et propositions de projets pour pallier aux risques d'adaptation du concept de durabilité aux défis du changement climatique. L'initiative a pour but la promotion l'urbanisation durable et inclusive en Afrique.

It is indeed a platform of all stakeholders and development organizations for experience and knowledge exchanges in order to tackle problems or prevent environmental disasters that humanity causes.

**Harunapam, 11.11.2009, Nigeria**

**INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION**

One very important issue that cuts across all the questions for discussion in this dialogue is the issue of public participation. Inclusive sustainable urbanization is not achievable without public participation - planning for the people with the people. It cannot be achieved without engaging and involving people. Since urbanization is all about people in cities, it cannot be said to be sustainable unless and until it is inclusive.

Sadly, in many cities around the world urban management is done in an autocratic manner rather than in a democratic manner applying the concept of public participation. In such instances, the urban manager, instead of acting as a technocrat assisting and guiding people in actualizing their desired goals within legal provisions, assumes a know-it-all stance, seldom soliciting for and applying public inputs while proffering 'expert' solutions to

urban management issues.

For urbanization to be sustainable it must be inclusive. The people for whom decisions and plans are made must be an integral part of the whole process from start to finish. If we are really planning for the people then we must of necessity recognize and respect their desires, aspirations, expectations, needs, wants, and most importantly their customs, values, traditions religion. It is only through active public participation that this is possible.

It is important to mention that public participation should not be limited to the elite who have access to the media and other means of communication and who are in constant contact with policy makers. Urban managers must be conscious of the silent voices of the urban poor (who are usually in the majority, at least in developing countries) and must reach out to them so that their views and opinions are integrated into the planning, decision making, and implementation processes. Only if and when this is done can we really say we have an all inclusive process of urban management, and ensure inclusive sustainable urbanization.

Many may be of the opinion that the above is impracticable, but hardly can anyone deny its advantages if practiced. To a large extent its practicability depends on the resolve of public agencies charged with urban management. Where such agencies are desirous of inclusive planning management the idea is very practicable especially as by the very nature of their job they are in constant contact with all the various groups in the city.

Some others may point to the self-gratifying attitude of the ruling class, especially in developing countries where representative democracy has not taken roots, as the reason why active public participation is impracticable. But in most cases the ruling class depend on technocrats, who should be able manipulate them to achieve their plans. Even where the ruling class is very high handed and overbearing, the planner should be able to strike a balance between the desires of the ruling class and those of the people.

The above played out most recently in the city of Jos, Nigeria, in an exercise to clear the streets of the central business district of petty street traders who had taken over the walkways and road medians [i.e. central reservations or pedestrian refuges] in the area. The exercise was successful primarily because the government agency charged with urban management involved the leadership of the traders in all discussions and decisions. Indeed, the agency worked with the traders in selecting an alternative location for them. At the end both government and the traders are happy. Also, there have been many instances in Jos, Nigeria, when legislators have come to the planning agency to voice the concern of their constituents regarding certain planning actions, the most recent being the action against street trading.

#### **Okumedjro, 11.11.2009, Togo**

As city dwellers find themselves more satisfied with thier housing and neighbourhood property values increase. it is also true that when investment cost are borne by a large number of user, it leads to increased profitability and social benefits.

SINURCO initiative in Lomé wish to centralize the planning urban development namely housing, construction and the management of water and land resources in partnership with the Togo Ministry of Habitat and Urbanism. It aims assignment is quality assurance in addition to the contribution to capacity building and facilitating exchange of knowledge and experience between planning authorities and urban development partners about perspectives on urban governance.

The main specific obstacle is the absent of competence (policy)in decentralised processes which is of great value in strengthening national ownership related to spatial planning.

#### **Mainathuo, Kenya, 11.11.2009**

For inclusive sustainable urbanisation, there is need for urban researchers and planners (especially in developing world) to adapt border thinking. This allows new way of seeing and knowing about urbanisation. Such ways of knowing and seeing lies between the formal and informal planning, representing a form of double consciousness on the way urbanisation is conceptualised within and outside dominant representations.



Such conceptualisations which recognise the urban as a part of a complex material and symbolic social system and that seeks to incorporate everyday negotiations and practices stands a better chance of being accepted than ones that continue to promulgate a dualistic mentality of formal and informal divisions. Such a system should balance the desire of residents (tenants and landlords) to remain autonomous (to assure them of their bargaining power and control) with the needs of the central/local government to normatively see people organised, services delivered and enforcement of planning regulations. What might be sought is a format that generates trust amongst mutually interdependent actors.

Questions arise about how to reconcile multiple perspectives and differences that are likely to emerge from actors with diverse interests. The problem however is not an inability to see across multiple positions but it is rather unwillingness to do by researchers and planners. To address the problem I advocate for 'epistemic humility'- a strategy that looks for intersections among different positioning and rationalities and enters into a dialogue at such situated moments. This entails going beyond scientific or technical knowledge to involve practical wisdom, emotional sensitivity, judgement, ethics and deliberation about values with reference to praxis.

### **Bwomezi, Uganda, 12.11.09**

Thank you, David. Allow me to contribute to this issue. All projects and policies should be designed according to community needs and the community should be engaged effectively in these strategies at all levels. How can we engage the community?

For the case of Uganda, there is a need to strengthen the role of the community in governance and this can be done through equal representation of all persons, youth, women, people with disability, among others in policy formulation.

Community committees should be formed to ensure monitoring and evaluation of projects and other infrastructure.

The government should provide adequate civil education to the community to improve the skills of the community to be able to understand what they want and how they can achieve it.

The community should be involved in planning and budgeting with regards to their projects to ensure accountability and follow up of their leaders.

### **Cooperativelasbrumas, 12.11,2009, Nicaragua**

A veces nosotras no participamos por que no entendemos los mensajes en ingles, pero la verdad es que solo el que vive en la base sabe y siente las dificultades que tenemos y nadie puede hablar si no vive en el terreno.

Para nosotras es muy importante que se tome en cuenta las comunidades por que consideramos que a traves del tiempo hemos venido fortaleciendonos y aumentando esas capacidades que han servido para transmitir a otras mujeres y hombres de otros lugares, como nosotras las mujeres campesinas e indigenas trabajamos arduamente en la comunidad para garantizar los alimentos nesarios para la familia, para vender al mercado y favorecer a gente de las ciudades, pagandonos mas barato solo por que somos agricultoras, por que las mujeres de base no podemos tener un centro de acopio para almacenar nuestros granos y vender mas caro, por que nuestras experiencias nos han dicho que las mujeres tenemos mucha capacidad para hacerlo y lo hemos demostrado y si eso es asi hay que invertir en las comunidades por que alli esta la produccion, la seguridad alimentaria somos las que movemos la economia del pais y podemos ser mujeres empresarias ha veces lo que se nos ha dificultado es la falta de tierra pero aun asi producimos y damos respuesta en todo momento en apoyar a la hora de un desastre natural en ennovar tecnologia de patio por falta de lluvia, hacemos alianzas, damos solidaridad, de tal manera que solo hay alguien que nos ha reconocido nuestro trabajo y eso es Groots Internacional.

English translation by Andrea Lampis - for which many thanks:

Sometimes we do not participate because we do not understand messages written in

English, but the truth is that only someone who lives at the base knows and feels the difficulties we experience. Nobody can talk unless his/she lives in the field.

For us it is very important that communities are taken into consideration. We consider we have strengthened over time and increased those capacities that served us to transmit (things) to other women and men from other places. We, indigenous and peasant women, worked hard in our communities to grant the food needed by our families, to sell it on the market and to favour people's from the cities that pay us cheaper prices since we are but agriculture workers. Why can we the women from the base not have a storage centre for our grains and then sell them at a higher price? Our experience has told us we the women have lots of capacity to do so. We have been demonstrating it and if this is true, and then it is a must to invest in community development since it is there that production takes place. We are those who generate food security and move the country's economy and we can be entrepreneurial women. At times what it has been difficult for us is lack of land, but still under those conditions we produce and provide answers at any time and rate; when it comes to help in the event of a natural disaster, when it is necessary to get into technological innovation in our own yard for lack of rain. Then we struck alliances, provide solidarity to others, in a way that only a few have recognized that to us, and this is Groots International.

### **Cyril, Ghana, 12.11.09**

Engaging communities Effectively

It will be imperative for all stakeholders concerned to consider social structures, there are systems and practices that promote both exclusion and inclusion. Groups and communities within a society are variously affected by the institutions of the society. Some may benefit from a particular rule or institution; others may be negatively affected by the same. The social structure of a society may, therefore, limit the opportunities and abilities of specific individuals and groups to gain access to meaningful opportunities, capabilities, and useful participation in decision-making.

In my country for instance, social structures, systems and practices such as kinship, inheritance, fosterage, rituals/religious practices, belief systems, etc. significantly contribute towards social exclusion or to the attainment of inclusion. While some systems, practices and structures such as the extended family system and the interethnic marriages foster equitable opportunities and capabilities by all to promote inclusion, others like witchcraft and other religious practices deepen exclusion.

Since social structures, systems and practices are embedded in the culture of a people, it is therefore important to focus on relevant interventions that contribute to refining of eliminating the practices, structures and systems which induce inclusion to promoting those which serve as drivers towards the attainment of an inclusive sustainable urbanized society.

### **Sirica, Brazil, 13 Nov 2009**

Dear Friends, I'll include my point of view.

Engaging communities is not as simple as it could hopefully be. I think we did a good job in Brazil, but there's still a lot to be done. Communities have their own way of living and of internal communication and functioning; they also have local leaders and leadership may have different values from ours. Each community is different and even more when talking about different countries. As outsiders, it's difficult to make our message understandable, so it's important to give quite a lot of time either for finding the right partner(s) (NGOs or associations) with links to the community, in getting to know the community and mainly, get the community's TRUST. Without trust from the community's side, there's no way that they will engage or develop ownership. Financial motivation shouldn't be used, because it doesn't bring trust with it. It might raise interest from certain people but they may not be the right ones. We need the trust of community leaders, youth, women and men from the community institutions, if there are institutions like religious, schools and/or association.

Most projects don't plan an adequate approach to the community. It takes time and their time requirements may be different from what we have. Awareness will come from the trust that engaging in the project and politically (citizenship awareness) will bring them the

promised benefits. Participation and engagement are based basically on trust and hope of achieving common goals. Civic participation and engagement derives from shared citizenship values and recognition of rights, both from citizens, institutions and governments.

#### **Okumedjro, Togo, 13.11.09**

Actually we need to build solid cooperation between community businesses and local authorities with the aims of promoting strategies for developing an ecologically sustainable city through dialogues.

There is a need to implement programs to increase knowledge about causes and effects of urbanization for construction workers, plumbers, electricians, architects, designers, planners and project leaders, maintenance technicians, engineers and property managers to include specific environmental requirement in practice for a comprehensive views of buildings and maintenance for the indoor environment, the energy and the natural resources in the community.

Then the community's direct and indirect concerned (credit institutions, insurance companies, and others suppliers of services and goods) as well as municipality shall all involve in promoting inclusive sustainable development in the society.

#### **Bwomezi, 17.11.2009, Uganda**

Dear David, I have been following closely all the contributions and views from my fellow members about this topic and they are so interesting. The major point I would like to put across is how we can engage the Youth of today effectively in community development. Uganda has a population of about 30 million people and the youth account for over half of this population. Despite the numerical strength of the youth, they continue to lead marginal lives. They lack access to basic social services like better education, shelter, lack of employment and poor health care which has been made worse by AIDS. In order to attain sustainable urbanization and development, we need to address the situation and influence the youth who make up a big percentage of our community in Uganda. The interventional programs should address particular needs of the youth among others include: organising the youth into a unified body and into CBOs helping them to start self help projects, increasing funding in form of grants and education scholarships for the youth which can help to improve their technical skills, putting in place programs that can foster behavioural change in order to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among the youth and involving the youth in policy and planning through increasing their representation at all levels of decision making.

#### **Harunapam, 17.11.2009, Nigeria**

It is one thing to desire to carry a community along in project initiation, planning and development, and another thing altogether, to actually have them participate actively. Having communities engage actively in urban development projects is dependent on the interplay of several factors and issues.

One important factor that influences a community's acceptance of a project and therefore it's effective engagement in it, is the project's compliance with the people's culture and tradition. This is especially as people can be very sensitive and uncompromising when it comes to their culture and tradition even at the expense of much needed and attractive economic gains. Therefore any project that will conflict with a community's culture and tradition will hardly ever win their support, and definitely not their active participation. Another important factor is being able to get the majority of the members of the community to be interested in and support the project. This is so important because it is very easy to mistake the support of elected representatives who may actually be pursuing their own individual or select group agenda, for the support of a community. This is most probable in communities with a high degree of illiteracy where a project executor may find it easier to interact with the literate representatives and also go on to think that they present the general opinions of the people they represent.

Furthermore, it is important that the support of the community be obtained for the entirety of a project and not only a part of it. For example, where there is general consensus that a community requires a school, the planner should continue to work with them even in determining its actual location. Instances abound in Nigeria where otherwise desirable

projects have been abandoned by the recipient community because of unacceptable location on account of the subjectivity and selfishness of elected representatives. It is also important that the community must be convinced of the importance of the project to the target geographical area, and also to the host community where these are separate and distinct. This goes a long way in ensuring community participation and the success of the project.

A community will also effectively engage in a project if they are convinced that it will not in any way be injurious to them; neither their persons nor their physical environment. A community will most probably reject a project that will have negative impacts on them except of course where the benefits to be derived far outweigh the negative impacts. Benefits considered important to poor communities include the products and services offered and the employment opportunities presented by the project.

#### **Suranjana Gupta, 17.11.2009, India**

In the context of DRR and adaptation, GROOTS International and Huairou Commission have launched an innovative mechanism that explores this very question - how do we enable communities to drive the demand for disaster risk reduction and adaptation programs.

This mechanism - The Community Disaster Resilience Fund (CDRF) is currently being implemented in LAC and India. It is a fund that channels resources directly to community based organizations, enabling them to set the agenda for vulnerability reduction in their communities. But it is more than that. The CDRF also acts sort of like a facility. It promotes initiatives that can be scaled up and expanded with the support of local stakeholders including local community organizations and local authorities. CDRF requires an institutional partner at the national or regional level so that local experiences can be upstreamed into national policy and program frameworks.

In India, the first phase of CDRF communities were supported with funds from Provention Consortium, Huairou Commission and GROOTS International and CDRF is being implemented through a group of Civil Society Organizations called the National Alliance for Adaptation and DRR. The National Alliance collaborates closely with the Government of India's National Disaster Management Authority. The National Alliance's task is to upstream lessons emerging from local practices to the Government.

The fund has been disbursed to community-based organizations in 8 states of India. Each of the community-based organizations mapped their risks, vulnerabilities and capacities before deciding on the priority issue which they would use the funds for. This has led to community initiatives across 88 communities that focus on DRR and adaptation strategies such as improving water supply, improving access to health services, raising levels of houses in flood areas, adapting agricultural practices, reviving indigenous grass to create fodder banks, accessing and protecting women's market spaces.

The CDRF also acts as a leverage fund that enables grassroots organizations to access other poverty reduction, infrastructure programs of the government. In addition the community based organizations who have accessed the funds are also committed to networking and transferring their practices to other communities. The National Alliance along with GROOTS and Huairou are facilitating grassroots learning networks that can rapidly scale up and transfer effective practices.

As the CDRF has been a fairly effective mechanism for getting communities to drive the demand for DRR and adaptation, the second phase of the CDRF in India will be supported by UNDP.

#### **Gennaro, 17.11., Italy**

I think that community can participate in different ways, in formal and informal way. Community participation is also linked to grassroots movements, that usually produce a local knowledge shared by community. Local knowledge is the knowledge based on people's firsthand experience rooted in a specific territorial area, that is:

\* an organized body of thought;

- \* dynamic and evolving;
- \* elaborated by groups who are intimate with their natural and social world;
- \* adapted to the local culture and environment;
- \* embedded in community practices, institutions and relationships based on common sense and empiricism;
- \* distinguished from formal scientific knowledge.

If recognized at the institutional level, I think that this form of knowledge can be an input for original territorial transformations in the local context.

**Bwomezi, 18.11.2009, Uganda**

David, I continue to think big on how to engage the community effectively with regards to sustainable development. In Uganda, the government needs to learn and implement a policy on how to work with the community. You will agree with me that the ultimate goal when working with the community is to attain sustainability. The crucial strategy is to build capacity of the various organizations within the community among them women, youth, elderly, the marginalized etc to become flexible. It is important to understand what a community wants and slowly learning and working with them. Uganda needs to plan and implement advocacy campaigns which enhance community mobilisation and training to enable the community adopt practices that can improve their standards of living.

**Badguyz, 19.11.2009, Nigeria**

I disagree with the claim that urban cities function under artificial situations....and I also disagree with the thought that we should develop an all-inclusive urban community, made up also of everyone in various social strata.

I live in a city that has just woken up to urbanization, and the interesting bit about this is that all efforts at urbanizing are being tackled with a sense of urgency, thus displacing individuals en-mass.

The schools of thought that argue in favor and against the new objectives believe that:

- 1: FOR: the city will be more habitable in terms of cleaner living conditions, reduced dark spots/hideouts, decongestion of the streets and markets, etc
- 2: AGAINST: in displacing individuals from a location, there should be a relocation plan for them....there should be some form of compensatory arrangement, that will ease the discomfort of being displaced especially from your means of livelihood.

My thoughts:

People need to be made to understand the syntax of development...communities are in need of individuals that will cultivate raw materials(usually from the rural communities)..and individuals that will manage efficient distribution...and then individuals that will sell to the consumers.

Solutions have been proffered...Micro-finance Banks have been instituted to service communities with registered cooperatives with the goal to develop their respective communities through provision of sustainable, sundry means of livelihood...i.e...farming, teaching, trading, construction, processing, manufacturing...the list is endless...and the rewards are sustainable...

I believe our communities should focus more on building capacity in their indigenes [i.e. local residents]...be pro-active rather than re-active...build formidable groups, made up of resourceful community members, and woo investors to their community with some sustainable-for-all barter deal.

I think that will make for a good first step...

**YCWU, 20.11.2009, Uganda**

Many local authorities sometimes look upon the situation of involvong local people in desperation. They are at times overwhelmed by the number and size of the problems that have to be solved.

One of the reasons for the frustration is that they tend to use the same frame of reference for all situations. They must look at the situation from the point of view of the local communities those they are trying to serve and engage. If they are working with people whose point of view they might not understand very readily they have to do their utmost to acquire their outlook so that the information and experience can be of maximum use to them. They must find the middle way not taking their understanding for granted but at the same time realizing that they have the ability to see their own problems and the solution which they must give these problems this is another way of engaging communities effectively.

When working with local communities they have to consider the matter of gaining acceptance when working with local people some of whom are semi-literate or traditionally directed. It is always convenient to seek support from them.

In Uganda we do have the Local Council System which works at the local levels, the local leaders are elected at village meetings and they comprise of nine people each one is assigned different duties. This is another way of engaging the community.

### **Imiranda, 23.11.2009, Peru**

Sorry for joining this discussion so late, but I wanted to contribute anyway, at least briefly and quickly.

From our experience in the Cities for Life Fora in Perú, we should start asking ourselves how to participate and involve us in what people are already doing to solve their own problems. I think we should turn the question upside down...only then you will be able to find our the right answers...

At least in Perú this is the way that for us in the Cities for Life Fora has worked better, first see what is going on, find out what do key actors are thinking, willing, sick of suffering and then those, willing (and capable) to do something about it.

Only then, listening to them, seeing what they are already doing about it, starting from there to build up action plans and later on broader strategies finding other communities with their similar worries to help each other to gain enough power to change policies and investment decisions that might change positively their lives....

This takes time, but works!

## **Mainstreaming vulnerability reduction measures**

### **PatGreen, Jamaica, 12.11.2009**

My historic research work over the years has shown that the development of building codes and sustainable Caribbean construction have evolved from historic responses to disasters. I wish to share how some of these measures have helped to reduce vulnerability in our region. In fact, I was so excited experiencing my first hurricane in 1988 in Jamaica, and played a vital role in my household as I had learnt how to cope and prevent the "pressure cooker" (my term) effect, that is the explosion of the building, from my 18th century investigations. My work has given me a clear understanding of the performance of historic structures, such as in New Orleans that survived the trauma of Hurricane Katrina, versus those more modern ones that did not.

Some of the earliest records I have encountered come from accounts of the 1692 tsunami that caused two-thirds of the city of Port Royal in Jamaica to sink into the sea (still there today as a time capsule) when some survivors ejected the "Negros" from their "resilient stick and thatch" houses and lived in them until they were able to re-build, because the elegant brick structures were all destroyed. When the city was rebuilt then using instead timber, the town was again destroyed by fire in 1702. Some have argued that the city, described then as the most wicked city in the world, was under judgment from God, nonetheless lessons were learnt about vulnerability. We saw the emergence of new construction forms resulting from cultural and environmental convergence.

By the 18th and 19th centuries a Caribbean style was easily identifiable, which responded



to the climatic effects not only of the Tropical sun but also offered resilience to hurricanes as well as to earthquakes. By 1907, after the city of Kingston in Jamaica had been destroyed by an earthquake, six months after San Francisco in the USA, the building laws were established based on the observations of the performance of construction practices, and interestingly again, the houses of the “poorer sorts” provided the yardstick and legislated for developers to model in the housing provision exercise that followed. Citizens lived in tents until new housing was provided.

The 1951 Hurricane Charlie that hit Jamaica saw the innovation of a construction technology that provided hurricane-resistant houses speedily for the poor that they could have erected themselves using appropriate technology that today has become a mainstay of not only Jamaican but Caribbean construction --again, the contribution of the poor and marginalized.

History has not only revealed risk preparedness, but also vulnerability reduction procedures that have resulted in legislation changes with mainstream consequences.

**Shivani Bhardwaj, 17.11.2009, India**

Our organisation SAFP ( Sathi All For Partnership) advocated for Sustainable Development Gender Equal Zones (SDGEZ) in planning of districts. We advocate after consulting groups at local level to synthesize learning for attention of the state. Communication on our work is sent to the state departments regularly, yet little is known about how the government may respond to what it has been asked to do.

To our satisfaction, the government in India has circulated an order that gender sub-plans will be a mandatory requirement to clear a district development plan. Without a monitoring and evaluation structure, this effort will be yet another exercise with no gain. We are therefore in the process of developing monitoring indicators for this vision and seek your involvement to learn from your experience.

We partner with informal sector workers who ask for land use on the city periphery, in their neighborhood green belt and coastline. They are quarry workers, salt pan workers, fish workers, domestic and construction workers. They have drafted their projects for economic betterment in a way that resources in their areas are utilized in a sustainable manner. Women like us who can earn in the formal sector economy have also asked for spaces to begin nature conservation and neighborhood service care service provision. These projects need to be seen as smallest unit of area planning.

At present these projects are not being considered positively at field level, though related policy and programmes have been drafted by the government. We have examples of women workers who have got land as a collective grant to run their women's resource centre, fishing ponds on lease and infrastructure from where they run their small scale units for paper products, bead products or run rice husking units. Some bonded workers have got the option of leasing small quarries and salt pans leased in their names as reparation for being under bondage. Yet these instances are taken as livelihood projects with no gender equality or mainstreaming lens let alone that they be planned for sustainability of the target group or of the geographical area the projects are in.

I would like your input on how the state and people like us could monitor activities that are listed as an advocacy agenda to develop sustainable development zones as an alternative to special economic zones through activities such as:

1. Community mapping all available resources in their area to support their livelihood and infrastructure needs.
2. Local, regional and national authorities adopting and implementing Gender Equality and Environment Action Plans, by including specific requests of local women for resource reallocation.
3. The State ensuring budgetary and infrastructure provisions for the the local action plan and insisting on equitable allocation under all the schemes and in local charters and district gender sub plans.

4. Resource-owning institutions declaring any unused, underused resources/assets and making those available for use with mutual consent of needy inhabitants as part of charter of equality between women and men in local life.
5. Corporations sharing resources with local communities: lands, buildings, vehicles, equipment, or any productive assets that can be used equally by women and men;
6. Civil society actively pursuing gender equality in resource allocation and the principles of gender justice and equality and the different outputs in daily work life.

Please respond by providing one concrete example from your work with possible monitoring indicators to understand how the access to land and forest leases the workers ask for and the care service provision educated women ask for can be measured in a way that the sustainability can be tracked.

Sincerely  
Shivani Bhardwaj

**DSimon, 22.11.2009, UK**

We were hoping that there would have been several responses to Shivani's request by now - ideally from other groups or advocacy workers who have already addressed similar challenges on the ground. Let me therefore repeat the request. For purposes of the eDebate and the report that will be submitted to WUF5 next March, it really would be helpful to have some comparative experiences, so please, folks, do respond!

To get the ball rolling, here are a few ideas of how you could attempt to monitor these interventions:

- a) There are numerous ways in which sustainability can be measured at different levels and for different purposes. For practical purposes, the most important thing is to keep it relatively simple and to ensure that it uses readily available or collectible data.
- b) If you aim to collect data regularly over an extended period of time, I could suggest counting the income from all sources - thus including money (both earned and welfare payments received), subsistence production, trade/barter, hunting/gathering - before access to land/forests and care services, and then tracking these over time, with measurements at monthly intervals. This could be done for the individual women, for households (distinguishing each income earner, including by gender), or at the community level, as appropriate. If the landholdings and areas of forest lease vary in size, then this should be documented as well, so that yields or income from those yields can be calculated per unit area (hectare, square metre or whatever).

The reason that it is important to document all income sources is that quite often if time and energy are devoted to new livelihood activities, especially if these are 'profitable' or essential, this may reduce time/energy on some previous activities - so it is important to be able to determine the net effect overall.

c) One gender-based indicator that comes to mind is the gender-based poverty index (GPI), which is a disaggregated version of the Human Poverty Index (HPI), itself linked to the Human Development Index (HDI). These are all explained in the UNDP's annual Human Development Report (available online at the UNDP's website, [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org), as well as in hard copy). However, at the very local scale you are working, this may not be sensitive enough.

d) If you are interested in reading up on such indicators in general, perhaps the most detailed study that comes to mind is the book, *Sustainability Indicators*, by Simon Bell and Stephen Morse (Earthscan, London and Sterling VA, 2nd edition, 2008) - although it does not deal specifically with gender-based indicators.



## **Localising Adaptation Policies and Plans**

**Okumedjro, Togo, 14.11.2009**

Hi

These are some approaches to localise adaptation policies and plans to the climate change and its impacts:

The implementation of an Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change can help to intensify efforts on tackling the environmental problems caused by the degradation of natural resources and environment.

It is essential to design, implement and monitor, with full participation of the stakeholders, effective and efficient projects, programmes and policies to reach a comprehensive and rational management of natural resources, formulating a viable action plan that will help the country cope with the adverse effects of climate change on social and economic sectors. It will foster the empowerment and advancement to a sustainable development.

Thus this project will include: (i) Strengthening and operationalization the institutional framework responsible for environmental issues and integrate the environmental dimension into sectoral programs, (ii) identification of priority activities to address urgent needs and immediate concerns of countries for adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change, (iii) promote a participatory and synergistic approach involving all stakeholders and other national programs in particular to contribute to improving national communication on climate change which is often outstanding in project document preparation.

The project should be a dynamic and flexible framework to guide and coordinate priority activities for adaptation to climate change in the country.

**Surjana Gupta, 17.11.2009, India**

At a recent climate change conference policymakers were bemoaning the number of communities whose consent was being sought for national projects and the years it would take them to get everyone's consent. If localizing adaptation plans and policies is to be about making sure that national and global programs and policies work for local communities most vulnerable to climate change, then we have to turn this discussion on its head and ask, "how do we get national governments, bilaterals and multilaterals to create programs and policies that are aligned with community priorities. What if the starting point was not a national project but an effective community led project which the government invested in scaling up?"

Perhaps one key step forward would be to create formal mechanisms that bring community based organizations together with policy makers for regular discussions and dialogues, so that policymakers really get to hear and understand what will work for communities and what won't.

UNISDR intends to create a Community Platform that will bring together community voices to convey to policy makers what works and does not work for them in disaster programming. The Platform will be a formal space that position communities as agents of disaster reduction whose inputs are crucial for effective programs.

**Kabir M Yari, 18.11.2009, Nigeria**

Increasing awareness technical, financial, human and financial capacities to localise adaptation policies & plans need to start with the basics. First the need to sensitise, motivate and mobilise the communities to understand the basic issues, for example why policies and plans are needed in the first instance, how the plans and programmes will benefit them and other communities and what roles the community and other institutions should play in the implementation of the plans. The building block is to involve the communities from scratch, in data collection about past disasters, hazards and risks in the community, vulnerabilities etc. When the communities come to terms with these realities, they are likely, with good guidance, to take driving seats in the preparation of adaptation policies and plans.

An example is an inner part of the walled city of Kano, Nigeria, that experienced frequent

flooding leading to loss of properties. A community development association in collaboration with the Sustainable Kano Project prepared an adaptation plan. The process of plan preparation was fully participatory, involving all key stakeholders. During the implementation process, many members of the community voluntarily donated land for drainage channels and many NGOs undertook to provide waste management services to ensure that the drainage channels were not blocked again. This act of participation has brought not only community buy-in but also mobilisation of local resources to implement agreed plans.

The Nigerian National Emergency Management Agency has commenced a pilot programme of preparing Disaster Risk Reduction Plans in some selected local governments. One of the key aspects of the plan is the identification and involvement of all key stakeholders, both institutions in the public and private sector as well as civil society organisations, local communities, educational and research institutions. The findings and draft reports are presented to the communities for discussion, validation and adoption. Through this way, the interest and awareness of the key stakeholders in the society can be aroused and hopefully sustained.

In addition, local radio programmes have proved to be effective in increasing awareness and mobilisation of financial support to communities and the implementation of plans and programmes.

#### **Okumedjro, 18.11.2009, Togo**

In response to the needs and challenges to adequate policies and plans, identified discussion with organisations, universities, research institutes and other interested actors have to develop an interest in localising adaptation policies and plans. As well as international policy implementation to promote awareness, strengthen local bases of knowledge building by disseminating policy options and practice.

In Togo the government made an available fund ready for social resettlement projects after disasters while efforts are being made to relocate vulnerable poor urban to safer places. Yet no policy or plan is implemented on adaptation to climate change. In regard to Suranjana Gupta's views, effective participation shall bring hope to the communities.

#### **Eddie Nsamba-Gayiiya, 19.11.2009, Uganda**

The Moderator Group requested for explicit responses on the above topic in the particular context of adaptation to climate change and its impacts. In my earlier posting I tried to link up the disaster risk reduction/vulnerability reduction and climate change impacts agendas in an urban situation. This time around before giving my thoughts on localizing adaptation policies and plans, I would like to stress one thing that tackling the root causes of global warming which lead to climate change is a key area for Africa because without mitigation there is no possibility for adaptation. Everything possible should be done to control and reduce the green house emissions. In Africa we have a peculiar challenge in that the greatest causes to the environmental degradation that have resulted into climate change in Africa are basically two: - scarcity of electricity (thus depending on biomass for energy) and primitive agricultural practices that cause farmers to encroach on the forests in order to eke out a wretched living. Behind all this the driving force is poverty (31% of Ugandans live below the poverty line – living on less than one US dollar a day).

The debate so far has not discussed mitigation strategies. Is this a sign that we are already resigned to fate!

Back to the topic of adaptation policies and plans, I have seen the contribution of Harunapam (Nigeria) to which I want to respond briefly: -

1. The proposal on equitable access to land to ensure that the urban poor are able to secure land for housing in well planned and adequately serviced areas that are not prone to disasters is a good one. But I am not convinced of the proposed means of achieving this – Harunapam sees the solution as being ensuring that all urban lands are adequately planned. It is a good idea to have all urban lands adequately planned but this will not stop the urban poor from going to live in disaster prone areas. These poor souls have no choice – poverty and other factors such as unflexible and inappropriate regulatory frameworks, inequitable land and housing markets, poor land delivery systems push these poor people to these areas. These are common problems in most of the urban areas in Africa.

2. Ground water pollution from septic tanks is not as severe as pollution from pit latrines. The majority of the urban poor cannot even afford septic tanks – then either use pit latrines or “flying toilets”.

3. I concur with Harunapam on the issue of solid waste management. It is one of the biggest challenges in our urban areas – at least in Kampala City the poor disposal of garbage is responsible for much of the flooding in the city besides the diseases which are a consequence of rotting garbage and the methane which also contributes to global warming.

The Cuban example of using urban agriculture as an adaptation measure to climate change is quite interesting. But what about the likely negative environmental impacts where agriculture is carried out in fragile ecosystems like wetlands (which like in our capita city Kampala serve as carbon sinks and also control flooding!). Any experiences from other African countries which have wetlands and swamps in their cities?

Eddie Nsamba-Gayiiya  
Land, housing & urban specialist, Uganda

**DSimon, 19.11.2009, UK**

Thanks for these observations, everyone. We are getting some interesting pointers that are consistent with the direction of discussions under the other topics. Okumedjro, could you give us a bit more detail about how the Togolese government is attempting to organise and carry out the relocation to safer areas?

Again, we would welcome anyone else able to provide similar information about other urban areas, including on whether there are any specific climate change-related strategies/funds/initiatives yet.

**Okumedjro, 20.11.2009, Togo**

David, Thank for your remarkable attention.

Actually I am a Coordinator of "Stratégie d'Actions pour l'Intégration et le Développement - Togo" and Reveille Togo news reporter.

So LOMÉ for two years, the rainy season drags on in Togo. Besides the damage, it has caused the death of fifteen people. Faced with the repetition of these episodes, some people prefer to leave their homes.

Faced with these repeated disasters, the Togolese Government seems helpless for a while. Then the Director of Civil Defence recognizes that the authorities were caught unawares in 2008. After analyzing the events, they have developed the PLAN ORSEC (rescue organization). The official said the device should now allow for better coordination of relief and come quickly to help victims of disasters.

Introduced this year to coordinate assistance to victims, the plan ORSEC provides how relief will intervene in case of disaster or flooding. But the Government of Togo is not just content to act only upon the arrival of disasters, so a second device called a "contingency plan" is established. It aims at the prevention of floods and natural disasters. To avoid improvisation experienced in 2008, this plan provides, for example, prefects who will coordinate the relief and prevention in the communities as well as warning mechanisms on the rise in water level.

In addition, this recommendations are tackled:

- Cleaning up the urban area of Lomé in the context of the prevention of potential risks to the management of existing ponds, natural depressions, ponds on vacant land, basins on land partially or fully constructed, basin without an outlet on the vacant land;
- Redevelopment of the lagoon of Lomé because of difficulties in pumping water it receives, would create a potential threat from flooding for its residents and constitute a source of pollution that would expose nearby populations to waterborne diseases or cancer;
- To undertake within the urban area of Lomé preventative measures for emergencies in

areas of flood risk areas are also vulnerable epidemiologically;

- regulation of the development of the right bank of rivers and channels of communication;
- a large-scale afforestation throughout the country in order to restore ecosystems and halt the drier climate;
- the establishment of a monitoring system and monitoring environment for degradation of vegetation cover and the potential risks of pollution associated with them;
- rehabilitation of old wells and digging new ones in areas most vulnerable to epidemics;
- Rehabilitation of laboratory quality control of petroleum products;
- strengthening the security arrangements on the stations of all oil companies whatever their size in order to eliminate fire hazards;
- The allocation of airport equipment and mobile health physics necessary to implement a response plan for rescuing crash on airport sites;
- creating conditions to encourage an effort to support agricultural production to prevent the risk of famine.

## **Climate Change and Human Rights**

### **DSimon, 20.11.2009, UK**

Today we are launching a new discussion topic in order to highlight an often neglected dimension of debates about urban sustainability and climate change, namely human rights. Several of the other topics in this eDebate have touched on relevant aspects during discussions of participatory approaches, engaging local communities and the promotion of local resilience, in particular. However, it is important to appreciate that climate change has direct implications for key basic human rights as enshrined in several UN conventions and internationally binding instruments, as well as people's ability to meet their basic human needs as promoted by the Millennium Development Goals, for instance. Our concern here is specifically with urban aspects of these.

We are fortunate to have the assistance of [Ulrik Halsteen](#) from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in launching this discussion. He writes as follows:

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights advocates that the decisions to be taken at the Copenhagen Conference and all other fora should be informed by international human rights norms and standards. This key message is also supported by the United Nations Human Rights Council and by a range of human rights bodies and mechanisms, both inside and outside the UN system.

The Human Rights Council has played a central role in drawing attention to the human rights dimensions of climate change. Importantly, in its resolution 10/4 (25 March 2009), the Council recognizes that: "climate change-related impacts have a range of implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of human rights". This was the first time the Council, or any other an inter-governmental body, unequivocally affirmed the negative human rights implications of climate change.

A OHCHR study on climate change and human rights (A/HRC/10/61) considered by the Human Rights Council in March 2009 gives examples of human rights affected by climate change-related effects and sets out some of the reasons why it is important and useful to apply a human rights framework to climate change.

Some of the report's key points are also highlighted in Human Rights Council resolution 10/4. For example, the Council recognizes that the effects of climate change "will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population who are already in a vulnerable situation and that human rights obligations and commitments can inform and strengthen international and national policy-making in the area of climate change, promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes.

On 15 June 2009, the Council held a three-hour in-session panel discussion on climate change and human rights which confirmed the general agreement of States that climate change effects human rights and that is useful to analyse climate change-related effects from a human rights perspective. As noted in the summary of the HRC panel discussion, State delegates underlined how a human rights perspective:

- (a) focuses the debate on climate change more directly on the real-life effects on the lives of individuals and communities;
- (b) directs attention to the situation of the most vulnerable and to the need to ensure that their rights are protected;
- (e) empowers individuals and communities and gave them a voice in decision-making processes,
- (f) introduces an accountability framework, holding governments accountable for reducing the vulnerability of their populations to global warming;
- (g) strengthens policy-making, drawing attention to the interactions between climate and human rights policies and promoting policy coherence and a more holistic, coordinated and effective global response to climate change.

The OHCHR study raises similar points. Firstly, by focusing on the effects of climate change on individuals, the human rights framework moves us beyond the aggregate cost benefit analysis which tend to dominate in climate change debates. It brings into focus that the adverse effects of climate change are felt not only by States and economies, but also – and more fundamentally – by individuals and communities.

Secondly, the human rights framework, based on the right of everyone to a dignified life and on the need to combat inequality and discrimination, is particularly well suited analyse how climate change-related effects people differently. As is discussed in the OHCHR study, certain groups tend to be particularly vulnerable to climate change effects and risks. For example, women often rely more than men on natural resources for their subsistence. This is also the case of indigenous peoples who often depend on natural resources for their livelihood and live in fragile ecosystems.

The fact that the human impact of climate change is not only related to environmental factors but also to policies and measures to protect vulnerable populations further underlines the relevance of a human rights analysis. Importantly, a human rights perspective draws attention to the need for disaggregated data and a more sophisticated analysis to identify who will be affected both by climate change-related effects and by policies and measures address climate change.

Thirdly, measures to effectively protect human rights are not only an obligation under human rights law but also essential elements for effective and sustainable climate change policy. While, human rights standards do not provide guidance as to specific technical and scientific aspects of climate mitigation and adaptation, they set the parameters for how Government should act in response to climate change-related problems. In particular, in order to effectively address vulnerability to climate change, policy makers must assess and understand the underlying causes. Moreover, the effective enjoyment of human rights, such as access to information, ability to participate in decision-making processes, access to education, access adequate health services and housing, are all important to strengthen the climate resilience of individuals and communities.

#### Specific effects on human rights in urban settings

The OHCHR study observes how sea level rise and storm surges will have a direct impact on many coastal settlements. In the Arctic region and in low-lying island States such impacts have already led to the relocation of peoples and communities. Settlements in low-lying mega-deltas are also particularly at risk, as evidenced by the millions of people and homes affected by flooding in recent years. Moreover, the erosion of livelihoods, partly caused by climate change, is a main “push” factor for increasing rural to urban migration. Many will move to urban slums and informal settlements where they are often forced to build shelters in hazardous areas. Already today, an estimated 1 billion people live in urban slums on fragile hillsides or flood-prone riverbanks and face acute vulnerability to extreme climate events.

These climate change-related effects have implications for, amongst others, the right to adequate housing in several core international human rights instruments and most comprehensively under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Human rights guarantees in the context of climate change include: (a) adequate protection of housing from weather hazards (habitability of housing); (b) access to housing away

from

hazardous zones; (c) access to shelter and disaster preparedness in cases of displacement caused by extreme weather events; (d) protection of communities that are relocated away from hazardous zones, including protection against forced evictions without appropriate forms of legal or other protection, including adequate consultation with affected persons.

The effects of climate change on the right to adequate housing and human rights related to the population movements and resettlement have been dealt with in more detail by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing and by the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons. A range of other Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council (i.e. independent experts who are mandated to look into specific human rights issues) have also started to including a climate change dimensions in recent and upcoming reports, including the mandates relating to the right to food, to adequate water and sanitation, and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Most recently, the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Ms. Raquel Rolnik, on 23 October 2009, presented a thematic report on the impact of climate change of the right to housing to the General Assembly. One of the report's observations is that the extent to which extreme weather events affect urban settlements is not only related to their locations but also to the quality and level of infrastructure and service provision. In this regard, she point to the acute problem faced by the hundreds of millions of urban dwellers who live in slums, which are usually located in the most hazardous sites within cities, at risk from the direct and indirect impacts of climate change: slums which lack the basic infrastructure and services necessary to protect their dwellers from environmental disasters.

For further information, see thematic page on human rights and climate change on OHCHR website at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/climatechange/index.htm>

#### **Raf Tuts, 20.11.2009, Kenya**

Apart from the urban slums, there are other areas, such as the Arctic settlements, where the linkages between climate change effects and human rights become evident, as climate change affects the human rights and livelihoods of local indigenous communities.

Arctic settlements are experiencing the melting of permafrost soils. Rising temperatures and the thawing of frozen land or permafrost are triggering the expansion of existing—and the emergence of new—water bodies in places like Siberia.

Permafrost or frozen ground is important for the stability of buildings and infrastructure. These soils also contain large quantities of ancient greenhouse gases, which could be released into the atmosphere as a result of widespread thawing. Models indicate that continued climate change might change the timing and magnitude of spring melting affecting spring flooding in communities. There is also concern over mobility. Currently many remote communities use frozen lakes and rivers as routes to traditional hunting, fishing and trapping areas or for accessing larger human settlements.

Livelihoods of whole communities will be impacted as a result of the changing state of the natural resources. These livelihoods and cultures are inextricably linked with sea ice. Nearly four million people live in the Arctic and their settlements are at risk by direct impacts of climate change. Also, their economic basis is in danger. These developments will change the living environment, the economic basis, values and mindsets of indigenous people dramatically. However, many indigenous peoples lack the financial resources and technology needed to adapt.

With such evidence of the likely impacts of Climate Change in arctic cities, it is clear that adaptation measures will need to be well articulated to include both physical planning and economic measures to sustain human development.

#### **Namraj, 22.11.2009, Nepal**

Human right is about the right of people to live in equality and continuity as supported by nature. If nature is going to be changed by human themselves there is no right remaining. Hence, it is the duty of human beings to save nature as of now where we are supported.

Urban people are more responsible to climate change that is influencing relatively more to rural people because they need to live the life that is more natural. Urban life is relatively safe and remains safe for some more time because they are living relatively more artificial or adopted livelihood. It does not mean that urban is not affected by climate change. Ultimately urban will suffer all kind of natural calamity and shortages of basic needs like water, food, electricity etc.

Hence for preserving human rights, urban should be more conscious for preserving nature by reducing carbon emissions by all possible means.

#### YCWU, 23.11.2009, Uganda

Thank you all for your contributions towards this topic of Climate Change and Human Rights. Climate change has affected most countries of the world and Uganda has not been left out on this effect. Temperatures have risen, resulting in an increase of infectious diseases.

We have had a number of droughts which have resulted in lowering of the water tables, leading to drying of boreholes, with the rural poor and the cattle corridor most affected. Rains are decreasing in amount, yet they fall in concentrated heavy showers and storms, leading to floods in lowlands and landslides in highlands.

Increased temperatures affect agricultural crops and lead to the emergence of new pests. Famine hit some parts of the country like in Teso where people lost their lives. Because of climate change, there is a huge concern about food security.

Lake Victoria, the world's largest tropical lake and the second-largest freshwater lake in the world, has been losing water at an alarming rate in the past years.

Invasive plants such as the water hyacinth have clogged lake waterways. About 30 million farmers use the lake as a source of water. And many countries in Africa use the waters of Lake Victoria. Due to heavy human extraction and high evaporation, the Nile river basin and its inhabitants are especially sensitive to climate change. Climate change may make Egypt drier and warmer, intensifying its dependency on irrigation. In light of the high and growing human demands for water and water-intensive agriculture on the banks of the Nile, reduced water flows under climate change would be catastrophic.

Climate change has affected the people in northern Uganda more because of the war which has been there for the past two decades and there has been a lot of human rights violation in that area by the rebels of Lord's Resistance Army.

Climate change affects right to life and security, the right to food, and the right to health in most parts of Uganda, Africa and the entire world.

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#### Nominations as potential invitees to the Dialogues at WUF5

- 1= Okumedjro – Togo
- 1= Bwomezi – Uganda
- 3 JNBona – Philippines
- 4 Harunapam - Nigeria

David Simon and Hayley Leck  
RHUL  
20 December 2009