

**Havana 2005
The Sustainable Cities Programme
& the Localizing Agenda 21 Programme
5th Global Meeting of partners**

Achieving sustainable urbanization
Innovations for local and global results

La Havana, Cuba - 26 June to 1st July 2005

Introduction of Meeting (Plenary)

**Context, Objectives, expected Outputs and Structure of
the Global Meeting**

Delegates;
Colleagues;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

First, I would like to congratulate the City of Havana on the Launching of the Global Campaign.

I shall take a few minutes to introduce the 5th Global Meeting of the Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) and Localizing Agenda 21 Programmes (LA21) partners world wide. Why are we here? What are we going to be doing the next few days? And what are the expected outputs?

Why? UN-HABITAT Urban Environment Section is taking the time to review the strategies SCP and LA21 has formulated to alleviate urban poverty. It has increasingly decentralized the support it offers to regional and national urban partners in an effort to increase the impact of the programme, i.e. to improve urban governance, urban planning, environmental management and reduce poverty. We are here to reflect on how well the strategy has worked so far.

In a nut-shell we ask, to what extent has the EPM approach been implemented according to GUIDELINES? Has it produced the impact we expected? Has it been mainstreamed? What are the factors that enabled or hindered mainstreaming, whether they relate to the EPM approach or are related to the context? I shall indulge further . . . are there aspects of the EPM process perceived as unreasonable or impractical? If not, have they been mainstreamed? If not, what can be done to mainstream the EPM process on the local, national level and what is needed on global level to facilitate this process?

These concerns have been documented in OBJECTIVES as follows:

1. To review the EPM approach to ensure mainstreaming of innovations in positive changes.
2. To strengthen the strategy to anchor EPM capacities in national and regional institutions to improve urban governance.

Specifically, to know what is mean by mainstreaming? What are the challenges and good practices in mainstreaming? To compare EPM to other methodologies and assess to what extent the good governance dimensions have been supported by changes in the institutional, policy and legal setting. And provide a platform for exchange of knowledge, expertise and experiences in BUS, SUM and EMIS.

‘Achieving Sustainable Urbanization – Innovations for Local and Global results’ is the theme for our meeting in 2005. The theme both speaks to the time taken to reflect on what has been accomplished and seeks the advice of its partners on the changes needed towards mainstreaming the innovations it represents.

In terms of structure:

We shall meet together in plenary sessions, roundtable discussions, meetings, undertake visits and enjoy the hospitality of our hosts.

In plenary sessions we will review target presentation on the Cuban experience and its regional context as well as on mainstreaming the EPM approach. On mainstreaming, we shall be introduced to issues on the Local, National, and Global levels, as well as to country specific experiences.

Discussion groups shall follow each plenary to discuss mainstreaming strategies. We shall be reaching into our experiences and the local knowledge we carry to discuss what factors have enabled and/or hindered mainstreaming EPM into daily practices? And what can be done to overcome the challenges. The discussion sessions shall report back to the plenary.

We shall also take time to attend thematic sessions and visit local institutions. The thematic sessions shall review progress made in areas that SCP/LA21 programmes are focusing, namely BUS, SUM, EMIS, Global issues local actors and CB agenda. Technical visits will show case Cuba's experience in urban development, environmental management and poverty reduction.

Regional groups shall have a chance to exchange views and coordinate agendas. In addition, I hope you shall take the time to review the exhibition by UN programmes and SCP/LA21 partners. Finally, Cuban hosts has made sure that you discover the beauty of La Havana and the unique culture of Cuba.

In term of events:

This afternoon we shall review the regional context and Cuba's experience. Specifically, know more about the UN-HABITAT/UNEP Strategy for the Urban Environment, GEO Cities and LA21 programmes implemented in Cuba.

Be sure not to miss the La Havana tour where you shall see La Havan's monuments.

The day will end in with a reception hosted UN-HABITAT at the Morro Cabana Complex

On Tuesday we start by directing our attention to the Local Level. This shall start y a plenary and continued in morning and afternoon discussion groups. The result again reported to a plenary. What are we going to discuss? Given the positive results that EPM approach has presented around the world, we ask: Did SCP/LA21 projects bring together local partners to collectively address issues? Did the project built the capacity of local partners? Were Urban Pacts produced? Has result been achieved? Were impacts sensed? Has the positive experience/s been instituted in day to day management mechanisms? What can we do to improve the way local partners apply lessons learned in their everyday routines? To what extent were available implementation instruments used?

In the evening you are invited to attend a Concert in the San Fransisco de Asís Convent.

On Wednesday you shall be attending one of many THEMATIC SESSIONS offered. In these sessions you shall review plans and accomplishments on the operational level.

You shall have the opportunity to share the experiences in managing 1. Basic Urban Services (the session will describe the BUS Initiative, country experiences showing unconventional, low technology/low cost solutions as well as how various institutions learn to improve the way they provide BUS); 2. share experiences in Sustainable Urban Mobility (the session will describe the SUM initiative, country presentations outlining benefits of urban mobility, policy options and instruments that include the needs of the poor, increase traffic safety and are environmentally friendly, non-motorized transportation, intermediate technology transport solutions), 3. share experiences in Environmental Management Information Systems (the session will show how to manage the collective know-how of stakeholders and support the EPM process, and how to mainstream EMIS into an urban management tool); 4. share experiences related to Global issues local actors (the session will show how cities, in adhering to environmental agreements on greenhouse gases, biodiversity, and coastal pollution issues, can make a difference on the global level, what are the win-win benefits for cities and local governments?); 5. share experiences in defining the Capacity Building Agenda (the session will discuss the experiences of documenting lessons learned in the field of sustainable development in SCP Countries and how this effort will be used to shape capacity-building efforts, to support tool development and adaptation, and to provide fundamental materials for training to support national and sub-regional anchor institution), and finally to share experiences in managing Environmental Resources and Energy Use (and importance of cutting down on wasteful use). These experiences shall, by the nature of their successes, demand mainstreaming.

Do not miss the TECHNICAL visits, on Wednesday afternoon. You can visit Havana Water Supply System and

management, The Old Havana Rehabilitation Project, The Community Based Neighborhood Improvement Project, Havana City and Metropolitan Park, Natural Disaster Management Center, or Urban Social Services Center. Each of these projects will demonstrate how Cuba is developing its urban setting, managing its environment and improving the lives of the poor.

In the evening you are invited to a Dinner hosted by the City of Havana in Lenin Park.

On Thursday we discuss the support we expect from both the national and global levels. Given the success stories on the local level, we ask our NATIONAL partners: How have national organizations supported these local experiences? Have they made the changes in the institutional, policy and legal setup to effectively support experience replication and up-scaling? Are National level partners communicating and coordinating effectively to support the resolution of cross-sectoral issues? How can local and international partners help them? On this level tough questions shall be asked.

On the GLOBAL LEVEL, we shall discuss how global partners can improve the way they support national and local partners to serve the poor and their environment. The questions to be asked are: How can we improve global support mechanisms? What gaps should be addressed by the international community? How can they get their acts together to increase the effectiveness of what they do? And finally, how can we make the playing field level on the international Level?

On Friday, we shall have the opportunity to LOOK FORWARD, reflect on what we have accomplished, to

internalize where we stand, recommend the way forward and hopefully implement what is needed to improve the lives of the voiceless, e.g. the disadvantaged and future generations. In the afternoon, regional organizations shall have the opportunity to meet bilaterally to coordinate their activities and plan ahead.

Expected outputs will include:

1. A report, documenting the Global Meeting.
2. Definition of local, national and global agendas and commitments from participants to implement the agendas in order to mainstream the EPM approach.
3. Contribute a sourcebook for SCP/LA21 project experiences to help mainstream the EPM;
4. Contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, particularly environmental sustainability, through the identification of good practices and recommendations.

I am sure that you have had the opportunity to celebrate the launch of the UN-HBITAT Global Campaign in Cuba. Make sure you attend cultural events scheduled to re-acquaint yourselves with the people and their aspirations. Take the opportunity to learn about others, acquaint yourselves with their ways and make sure that success stories prevail.

Thank you