UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Contribution to the
2014 United Nations Economic and
Social Council (ECOSOC)
Integration Segment

UNDP input to the 1st ECOSOC Integration Segment on sustainable urbanization

Half of the world's population now lives in cities, and the number will rise to 70% by 2050. Urban GDP represents about 80% of the world GDP. The challenges faced by many cities are daunting: growing inequality, prevalence of violence and insecurity, lack of legal protection, arcane or inadequate governance, high vulnerability to shocks, struggling public services, unsustainable resource consumption, environmental degradation, etc. As such, cities are at the forefront of confronting intensely complex development challenges, which need to be addressed in an integrated manner across all the dimensions of sustainable development.

At the same time urban centers are the engines of growth, culture, creativity and innovation. Cities produce breakthroughs in basic service delivery, in sustainable energy solutions, in programmes targeting maternal and child health, in transportation infrastructure, in waste management, etc. There are many good examples to be found in cities of vibrant economic governance, public private partnerships, legal empowerment of women and interactions between governments and civil society.

UNDP is committed to supporting countries, together with our partners, in their efforts to address the challenges and harness the potential to achieve sustainable urbanization.

Key areas that need to be addressed include:

Urban poverty, employment and livelihoods

o   Redistribution through taxes and social spending
o   Promotion of decent employment and social protection coverage for those outside the formal economy
o   Policies that favour growth that generates employment for all, and particularly for those less skilled and for youth

In the case of urban livelihoods in post crisis situations, the following should be considered:
o   Urban recovery in post crisis (disaster and conflict) around economic and livelihoods recovery
o   Community infrastructure rehabilitation and access to basic infrastructure and services
o   Harnessing social cohesion contributing to peacebuilding and resilience.

Urban governance

o   Facilitation of participatory and inclusive urban governance institutions
o   Strengthening transparency and accountability within urban governments
o   Strengthening the policy dialogue between national government, mayors and urban local governments to enhance coherence and coordination
o   Creating public private partnerships and enhancing corporate social responsibility for improved urban service delivery
o   Facilitation of effective rural-urban linkages to promote peri-urban areas and "green cities"

Urban disaster risk management
Accelerating efforts to address comprehensive risk reduction and mitigation and adaptation policies as part of integrated urban planning with a focus on:

o   the concerns and contributions of the most vulnerable
o   the underlying causes of climate change and disaster risk and their links to education, health, agriculture, energy, transportation and infrastructure
o   the need to develop urban resilience by connecting the present day development and risk management concerns with medium to longer-term urban growth projections (including urban built environment, land-use planning, urban growth systems, processes and triggers including socio-economic aspects and capacity development)

Urbanization and gender

o Strengthening livelihoods and women's economic empowerment strategies with the planning of cities and the delivery of basic services as key prerequisites for equitable city prosperity
o Targeting gender policies and strengthening accountability for gender equality and equity
o Addressing quality of life and infrastructure, productivity and equity in power and rights between women and men in special reference to the "time poverty" due to inadequate urban services; violence against women particularly in urban slums; unequal education and training opportunity as well as unequal division of labour.

Urban environment/natural resources

o Integrated urban planning to address unsustainable consumption and production patterns that are increasing water and air pollution, land and forest degradation, waste generation and the use of harmful chemical substances, while considering the short, medium and long-term impacts on urban and rural communities and the linked productive sectors driving urban growth
o Ecosystem management to ensure the regulation of weather-related hazards and strengthen livelihoods

Urban energy efficiency, transport, infrastructure

In many urban centers in developed and developing countries, per capita resource use and emissions remain high due in part to inefficient energy, transport and infrastructure systems. Major transformations are needed in these systems including by:
o designing and implementing robust policy and regulatory reforms attractive to investment in more efficient systems that also rely on a greater mix of renewable energy;
o strengthening institutional capacities and effective business models that consider the impact on the access and cost to poor households, while building the necessary skills in the labour force to match market needs; and
o facilitating financing for investments from public, private, national and international sources.

Vulnerable urban population

With rapid urbanisation stark health inequities are emerging. Global estimates show that as many as 50 percent of people living with HIV reside in cities. Most cities are also experiencing a higher burden of HIV among key populations at higher risk of HIV infection including men who have sex with men, sex workers, injecting drug users and transgender persons. Actions need to be taken to meet the health needs of the people who are most vulnerable and socially disadvantaged by developing their capacity to promote and protect their health and human rights and increase their access to and uptake of HIV and health services

Approach

To address the complex, interconnected and fast changing challenges in cities in a timely manner, the following capacities of various urban actors should be supported to be strengthened:
o Capacities to foresee risks and to act upon them;
o Capacities to collaborate in order to harness the creative power of multiple actors and encourage and make best use of participation of wider citizen experts through innovation; and
o Capacities to share knowledge, match demands with scalable solutions around urban development, and foster partnerships through south-south and triangular cooperation.