

## WUF9 HIGHLIGHTS FRIDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2018

Two high-level roundtables took place on Friday at the ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9): 'Cities for All with Housing at the Centre' convened in the morning, and 'The Urban Dimension in Climate Change Action' in the afternoon. Four special sessions were held on the themes: migration; land tenure; culture and diversity; and informal settlements and slum upgrading. Many other events were organized around the venue, including an art exhibition, consultations, and various side events.

### HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLES

#### CITIES FOR ALL WITH HOUSING AT THE CENTER:

Greg Budworth, Compass Housing Services, Australia, moderated the panel discussion with co-chairs Soledad Núñez, Paraguay, and Hardeep Singh Puri, India.

On addressing inequality in cities, Azman Mokhtar, CEO, Khazanah Nasional, Malaysia, stressed that 'prevention is better than cure,' and highlighted that basic infrastructure and accessible markets are key. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, stated that well-designed urbanization plans contribute to inclusiveness and generate economic value.

India and Mali shared country experiences of providing 'social housing', with India highlighting the role of civil society in ensuring a collaborative approach towards providing all Indians with a home by 2022, and Mali mentioning its tax breaks to developers, which has had the secondary benefit of establishing industrial areas.

José Carrera, Development Bank of Latin America, highlighted the potential to address social exclusion through housing initiatives. He argued that questions of productivity are important for cities, which, he said, do not only provide goods and services but also create opportunities for investment, employment and growth. Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, preferred 'inclusive growth' to 'inclusive cities' and, with several other speakers, encouraged broadening the focus from building houses to managing the land, so as to ensure that new housing is integrated with transport routes and access to services and jobs. Countries highlighted national initiatives, including: an energy-welfare partnership in Seoul that has created jobs in retrofitting homes for energy efficiency; action by Ugandan slum dwellers to gather data on slums for planning purposes; and Thailand's 'cities without slums' housing development strategy that is working with civil society partners. India and Slum Dwellers International proposed *in-situ* slum development as a way forward. India argued that trust needs to be built between governments and slum dwellers to enable cooperation and for slum dwellers to feel confident they can return after upgrades are completed.

On the critical factors for affordable housing, the Netherlands and Morocco specified green growth, spatial design and cooperation across sectors, including with citizens. Panelists

underscored the importance of strong leadership. Singapore highlighted his country's ethnic integration policy through housing, which prevents stratification by race.

The co-chairs concluded that location, public spaces and access to services need to be considered when providing housing to all. They warned that inequality leads to anger and violence, and makes cities uninhabitable. India stated that housing is fundamental to human existence, and that 'we must act to provide it.'

### URBAN DIMENSION OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**ACTION:** Moderator William Cobbett, Cities Alliance, introduced the session, saying cities will be key to implementing the global agendas of sustainable development, climate action and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). Ministers from Botswana and Kiribati co-chaired the session.

In a keynote, Zaini Ujang, Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, Malaysia, presented his country's Green Technology Master Plan that identifies 16 sectors as areas with high potential to transition the economy towards sustainability. He stated that to move from reform to delivery capability requires boldness and quality of execution.

Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, UN-Habitat, identified strategies to scale up city climate action plans, including: strengthening mid-level governance; building networks of local officials such as the Global Covenant of Mayors; and providing the scientific basis for climate action through giving local officials understandable tools.

Nonofo Molefhi, Minister of Infrastructure and Housing Development, Botswana, reiterated the call for decisive leadership and noted that the brief 'shelf life' of politicians leads to expedient rather than bold decisions on issues that really matter.

Kobebe Taitai, Minister for Internal Affairs, Kiribati, said addressing climate change will involve changes in people's social values, ethics and morals. He urged achieving 'the bold scenario' envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

**Panels:** In the first panel, urban and civil society leaders from Germany, Morocco, France and Norway discussed the threat of climate change to cities, and highlighted that carbon emissions will exponentially increase if construction keeps pace with the current rate of urbanization. Germany noted that two-thirds of current urban coastal zones will be submerged by sea-level rise by 2050. Panelists highlighted approaches including: sharing innovative ideas through the Global Compact of Mayors; reviewing legislation in most countries to allow greater participation of women in decision-making processes and development of adaptation plans; and the CitiesIPCC conference, which is the first event where mayors and scientists will convene to generate a research agenda on the role of cities in reducing the impacts of climate change.

In ensuing discussions, C40 Cities noted the importance of implementing new building codes, retrofitting for energy efficiency, and ensuring at least a 30% shift away from car transport to walking and cycling. Participants called for

improving the flow of climate finance to cities and for making a strong case for local stakeholder involvement in urban transitions. One participant noted that no city in Malaysia holds local council elections, and questioned how climate-induced temperature rise should be addressed in this context.

In the second panel, city planners and donors outlined challenges for mitigation and adaptation in rapidly growing cities, and ways to access the necessary finance. Liberia proposed foreign corporations engaged in extraction of timber, fish and minerals in developing countries should address climate change impacts through their corporate social responsibility actions. Other speakers highlighted challenges for: developing practical standards for sustainable infrastructure construction; convincing investors that sustainable infrastructure poses fewer risks; dealing with uncertainty in planning ‘smart cities’; and promoting urban resilience, for example, by planting trees not only as decorative elements but as part of an urban ecosystem.

### **SPECIAL SESSIONS**

**UNLOCKING POSITIVE IMPACTS OF MIGRATION IN CITIES:** Christophe Lalande and Jesús Salcedo Villanueva, UN-Habitat, introduced moderator Clare Short, Cities Alliance, who underlined the variety of processes ‘migration’ can refer to, including international or internal movements of people, as well as asylum seekers, refugees, or economic immigrants. She also noted that, in an age of austerity, the diversity, creativity and dynamism that migration can bring to cities is too often overlooked.

Short then introduced the panel, which included representatives of local authorities, the UN, governments and civil society. Panelists noted recent advances at the multilateral level, underscoring the many references to migration in major UN documents such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and NUA, as well as in the recently released zero draft of the Global Compact for Migration. They then discussed good practices in managing immigration flows, underlining the importance of data-driven policies, as well as policies that promote quick and comprehensive integration, including the so-called ‘out of camps’ policies. Several speakers spoke of the difficulty for cities to absorb a large influx of migrants. One panelist acknowledged the sometimes-problematic relationship between local and national authorities on immigration policies, referring to examples in Greece. Another highlighted that, while migration is always a matter of national policy, it manifests itself at the local or municipal level. Other themes included transforming the narrative around migration governance, including equipping the media to reflect the nuances of migratory flows, rather than sensationalizing the issue. Short concluded the session by reminding the audience that ‘we were all immigrants once’ and, with UN-Habitat, thanked the panel for their contributions.

**SECURITY OF TENURE, LAND MARKETS AND SEGREGATION:** Moderator David Mitchell, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, moderated the session, which focused on the ‘prosperity dividends’ to be gained from implementing the NUA and the SDGs. Panelists sought to: provide clear guidance from multi-sector perspectives on how tenure security can help harness land value in order to develop and sustain inclusive urbanization, particularly in relation to the provision of housing, livelihood generation and financing of critical infrastructure; clarify the roles of various sectors and partners; and highlight successes from cities around the world.

Mexico, South Africa, the EU and Zimbabwe noted challenges to implementing land tenure and security policies, including: lack of standardized data, outdated cadaster and information systems, pace of urbanization that far exceeds the technical capability of city administrations to plan for expansion, historical inequity, and corruption driven by slow bureaucracies.

Technical presentations pointed to political will and capacity to implement plans as necessary ingredients for overcoming urban challenges. They recommended underpinning essential development infrastructure with sound and inclusive approaches to land and security of tenure. William Cobbett, Cities Alliance, said dysfunctional property markets are the most significant challenge, and suggested that this is a political and not a technical problem.

### **INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND SLUM**

**UPGRADING:** Monika Glinzler, South Africa, moderated the session. Panelists from Brazil, the European Commission, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, TECHO International and UN-Habitat discussed the importance of slum upgrading in order to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, underscoring that people must be at the core, working together to transform cities. An audience member from Kenya concurred, noting that communities ‘know exactly what they want and where they need to go.’

TECHO International explained that the main challenge in Latin America is to deliver high-impact solutions with long-term development potential. Brazil showcased her country’s experience, including financing urban integration, housing, land adjustment, environmental recovery and social inclusion, in a holistic and participatory way. Papua New Guinea stressed that land tenure is necessary for people in his country to invest in their land. On good practices in capacity building, panelists highlighted that civil society organizations serve to link community and local governments.

Participants from Nigeria, Kenya, and Mauritania called for more access to financing, and one participant proposed empowering slum dwellers through self-organized savings groups. The European Commission acknowledged that grants for slum upgrading are limited, and drew attention to its support for innovative investment options aimed at transforming informal settlements into liveable housing. Brazil added that slum upgrading is much cheaper than the alternatives. UN-Habitat explained that in addition to financing at other scales, the agency provides capacity building for community-level financing, to encourage upgrading of informal housing.

### **LEVERAGING DIVERSITY AND CULTURE, SHAPING**

**THE CITIES FOR ALL:** Moderator Jyoti Hosagrahar, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), introduced the session, which was co-organized by UNESCO and UN-Habitat. She highlighted UNESCO’s focus on ‘the operational aspects of culture,’ which, she said, are those on which concrete interventions and policies can be devised. She then stressed that culture is a crosscutting issue for the SDGs and the NUA. Some participants drew attention to the NUA’s acknowledgement that culture is essential to ‘humanizing’ cities and empowering citizens to play an active role in the development agenda. Others stressed the need for developing statistical and non-statistical indicators to demonstrate how culture contributes to the SDGs. Panelists highlighted good practices in leveraging cultural diversity in cities, for example, through creating ‘urban laboratories’, which are participatory experiments in including citizens in the urban planning process. Panelists and participants discussed the importance of, *inter alia*: defining culture as dynamic and hybrid, rather than fixed, in order to avoid considering an influx of new and diverse cultures in cities as a threat; and valuing both ‘high’ and ‘low-brow’ culture, considering that both have an important role to play in a city’s dynamism and creativity. Several speakers concurred that more research on cultural diversity in cities is needed, with some questioning the cultural impact of building affordable housing away from city centers. Hosagrahar concluded the session by stressing that cultural diversity in cities is first and foremost about inclusivity.