WUF9 HIGHLIGHTS
SUNDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2018

Discussions continued at the ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) on Sunday, with participants crowding into a special session on 'smart cities', and many visitors attending the exhibitions at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. Two high-level roundtables convened, on 'Innovative governance for open and inclusive cities' in the morning, and on 'Sustainable urban development for peace and security' in the afternoon. Stakeholder consultations, dialogues and networking events took place alongside special sessions on urban disaster recovery, urban data, and urban mobility with safe and accessible transport for all.

HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLES

INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR OPEN AND INCLUSIVE CITIES: Diana López, UN-Habitat, introduced the session, and Philipp Rode, London School of Economics, acted as moderator, with session co-chairs Mosharraf Hossain, Minister of Housing and Public Works, Bangladesh, and Neal Rackleff, Housing and Urban Development Department, US. In opening remarks, Mohammad Mentek, Secretary General, Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, Malaysia, highlighted his government's establishment of 14 Urban Transformation Centres that are providing low-cost, rapid and high-impact public services close to where citizens live and work. Raf Tuts, UN-Habitat, said the New Urban Agenda (NUA) is a governance-oriented framework that requires urban leadership based on subsidiarity, multilevel governance and continued learning.

Rode described open cities as places where inclusivity and trust, built at the local level, implies 'the right to the city' and its services. Rackleff described urban reforms in US cities, where decision making has been transformed through providing better data and information to leaders. Hossain shared experiences from 13 slum upgrading programmes in Bangladesh, highlighting waste management as one of the biggest challenges.

Carlos Martínez Mínguez, Mayor of Soria, Spain, reminded participants that the best way to have a responsible government is to hold them accountable. Brittany Lane, Open Government Partnership, cited examples from the US, Tanzania and Spain, noting that local politics present an opportunity to rebuild trust while simultaneously improving quality of life for local citizens. Dieter Zinnbauer, Transparency International, offered three avenues to address the trust deficit and to tackle corruption, including: visibility of budget, tender and contract processes; transparency of real estate ownership to avoid money laundering; and simple feedback mechanisms, such as service-rating stations at airports and hospitals.

Joseph Kokonyangi Witanene, Minister of Urban Development and Habitat, Democratic Republic of Congo, lamented the corruption and loss of trust in his country even among ministers, as well as the lack of urban regulations and town plans in new provinces after decentralization.

Pascal Smet, Minister of Mobility and Public Works, Belgium, suggested that, while a strong and critical media is a necessary element of a democratic system, constantly treating politicians as 'suspects' is destructive to the functioning of democratic processes.

Sandeep Chachra, ActionAid India, warned that overcrowding, with 70-80% of people currently living on 10-20% of urban land, will lead to large-scale illegal occupation of land and empty buildings, unless policies to address urban migration are prioritized.

In comments from the floor, Denitsa Nikolova, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria, highlighted critical factors in improving urban governance, including digitalization, decentralization and enabling local leadership to become more efficient. Cécile Riallant, International Organization for Migration, underscored trust and participatory decision making as key to taking vulnerable groups 'from policy objects to subjects.'

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACE AND SECURITY: Jeanette Elsworth, UN-Habitat, moderated, and Dorji Choden, Minister of Works and Human Settlement, Bhutan, and Hassan Abdelgadir Hilal, Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development, Sudan, co-chaired the session. In opening remarks, Choden questioned what is required to create a safe city, stressing the need to look at both physical planning as well as 'softer issues' such as job creation and inclusivity. Hilal underlined the need for inclusive national urban policies, stating that 'sustainable peace and development are two sides of the same coin.'

Wael Al-Ashhab, UN-Habitat, stressed that his agency's mandate includes both long-term development as well as crisis management. He described efforts to profile cities and to devise an urban planning strategy in Darfur, South Sudan. Kevin Nelson, US Agency for International Development, described a programme that seeks to tackle crime by redesigning public spaces in Latin America. Emilia Sáiz, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments, drew attention to 'Madrid's commitment to peaceful cities' and its emphasis on violence prevention.

Abdul Baqi Popal, Deputy Minister of Municipalities, Afghanistan, underlined three ways in which governments can promote peace in cities: prioritizing inclusive policies; devising national programs; and engaging local communities. Lana Louise Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica, said that grassroots women groups have been working in urban violence prevention for decades with proven results, and they should be included in the policy-making process. Achim Wennmann, Executive Director, Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, shared insights on legal and judicial architectures that have been shown

to promote peace, adding that peacebuilding is about 'managing the space of the unforgivable.' Taysir Mahmoud Mousa Taha Abu Sneineh, Mayor of Hebron, Palestine, emphasized the need for comprehensive approaches and investment in education in conflict environments.

Speaking from the floor, government and UN representatives in conflict and post-conflict situations discussed examples of community projects and their value, mentioning, *inter alia*: training in carpet weaving and other skills for internally displaced women who have resettled in parts of Afghanistan; and a joint water project that resolved conflict between farmers and nomadic pastoralists in Darfur. Others noted the value of community policing and promoting food security.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

SMART CITIES AND THE GROWING ROLE OF FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES IN SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION: Bert Diphoorn, Akvo Foundation, moderated the session. In introductory remarks, Andre Dzikus, UN-Habitat, noted the UN Secretary-General's establishment of a working group on this topic at the Chief Executives Board for Coordination. He underlined that leveraging data and new technology offers opportunities to improve participation in governance, as well as accountability in service delivery. He urged participants to focus on bridging the digital divide.

Panelists presented experiences in creating smart cities, including: the development of Malaysia's Cyberjaya, a purpose-built technology hub; Singapore's Smart Nation initiative, which invests in technology infrastructure and capabilities in the city-state; Catalonia's 'urban assembly', a representative group that will involve local authorities and civil society in equal measure; and China's 'smart planning' in transportation. They discussed outcomes from partnerships with the private sector and pilot projects, including the prerequisites for smart cities to emerge in developing countries, such as basic service delivery.

Audience members raised questions and concerns around the impact of technology, and particularly artificial intelligence, on human lives. A representative of the Workers and Trade Unions Major Group highlighted that, for workers, efficiency and automation often resulted in unemployment. The panel ended by reiterating their definition of a smart city, with some saying it is an 'ecosystem' that goes beyond technology to create a city that attracts and retains people by improving their lives, and others stressing that the term must also include resilience and inclusivity.

RESTORING HOPE: BUILDING BACK CITIES AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER AFTER DISASTER: David Evans, UN-Habitat, opened the session. Explaining that, 'our actions should build on the resilience of people,' he warned that excluding those affected by disasters during rebuilding will cause unintended harm. In his keynote address, Robert Glasser, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, noted that lack of knowledge and financial capacity leads to disaster vulnerability – gaps that can be filled through implementing the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. Moderator Sri Husnaini Sofjan, Huairou Commission, invited panelists from Haiti, Iran, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal and the Philippines to share their experiences of how they responded to disasters in their country. Panelists highlighted the importance of conducting training schemes for masons and engineers, and enabling affected populations to actively participate in rebuilding their communities following a disaster. Many underscored the importance of disaster preparedness.

Hans Guttman, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, moderated a second panel in the session. Panelists from the European Commission, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the UN Development Programme, and the World Bank called for increased engagement with those affected by disasters and recognition of their agency, emphasizing the need for accountability, coordination and communication across all sectors and levels. Several added that time-sensitive preparedness plans are crucial, and the European Commission questioned how to 'build back' not just from natural disasters but from man-made disasters caused by civil war.

Audience members called for the inclusion of grassroots leaders, and particularly women, in disaster recovery, emphasizing their roles as agents of change.

DATA FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Eduardo Moreno, UN-Habitat, moderated this afternoon session, which focused on the role of statistics and data collection in monitoring and reporting on Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) on sustainable cities.

In the first panel discussion, Robert Ndugwa, UN-Habitat, noted that moving from the Millennium Development Goals to the SDGs has required developing new definitions and indicators of achievement. Panelists presented different tools and approaches for capturing urban data, including: Malaysia's national spatial I-Plan database and its requirement for consistent data collection, horizontal data integration, and continued training; Mistra Urban Futures' collection of data from seven cities as an exercise to determine how cities fare in engaging with the SDG 11; and the European Commission's Global Cities Database, which has a 'territorial dashboard' that reports city demographics and indicators of economic development and resource efficiency.

In the second panel discussion, panelists described their activities, including: New York University's monitoring of a global sample of 200 cities from countries that have 78% of the world's population; and UN-Habitat's six-step National Sample of Cities (NSC) process for monitoring SDGs that relate to urban development. Panelists from Botswana and Tunisia presented their experiences with the NSC programme, highlighting challenges such as differing definitions and understandings of a 'city' and its boundaries.

URBAN MOBILITY AND SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT FOR ALL: Oliver Lah, Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, Germany, moderated the session. Andre Dzikus, UN-Habitat, introduced the topic, explaining that city transport comes with direct and indirect externalities such as pollution, accidents and time spent in traffic. The panel included country representatives from Brazil, Germany, Luxembourg, and Malaysia, various transport advocacy groups, and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

François Bausch, Minister of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure, Luxembourg, described the holistic transit system under construction in his country, noting that its multi-modal hubs will provide connectivity with different types of transport.

Speakers presented the benefits of alternative forms of transport, including cycling and cable cars. The European Cyclists' Federation noted that cycling alleviates two of the four major causes of non-communicable diseases: air pollution and sedentary lifestyles.

Several panelists underscored the need for data collection on both formal and informal transit systems, which, they explained, will be necessary for policy development. UNESCO highlighted its Sustainable Urban Transport Index, which measures transit in Asian cities, and the technology company WhereIsMyTransport described their data collection efforts in African cities.

In a closing discussion facilitated by Mark Major, Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport, panelists from Kathmandu, the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, and the Dar Rapid Transit Agency (DART) outlined policy recommendations, highlighting capacity building and financing needs to scale up sustainable transport options.