



**United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth  
Housing and Sustainable Urban Development  
(Habitat III) Working Group**

**--- Response to Issue Papers ---**



**UN Major Group for  
Children and Youth**  
the space for children and youth in the United Nations

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# Area 1 “Social Cohesion and Equity: Livable City” Issue Paper Response

## Summary

### Importance of issues

Social Cohesion and equity is essential for urban sustainable development. Even the most sustainable and well planned city will fall short if people are not put at the center; if women and girls are afraid of harassment in public spaces; if minorities, LGBTQI, and other marginalized social groups suffer from discrimination and violence; if migrants are not treated equally and respectfully; if young people are simply thrown aside, their potential disregarded and forgotten. On the other hand, planning and infrastructure are tightly connected to inclusiveness. A city cannot be livable if it does not consider geographical inequalities, individual disabilities, or special conditions such as childhood, youth, and old age. Also, what must be stressed upon is that no city can be livable without culture. Cities should not be built to accommodate people simply as workers, rather, cities must fulfill the needs of its population in all dimensions.

### Why is this important for young people?

By 2050, three quarters of the world’s population will live in urban environments. Over 90% of this growth will take place in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (LAC). Among these, LAC is the most urbanized region in the world. LAC is also a young region where the average age is 29.5 years and youth aged 15-29 comprise 25% of its total population. Nevertheless, according to the [2014 Ibero-American Youth Report](#), youth in the LAC face great problems like social exclusion, mainly because of the existing difficulties regarding the development of their capacities, access to opportunities, and safety.

Young migrants account for one third of the total migrant population. Moreover, half of the world’s refugees are children under 18 years of age. Globally, 123 million young people cannot read<sup>1</sup>. The right to education, health, water and sanitation, and other all internationally recognised facilities lie at the core of the urban development for young people. Urbanisation produces opportunities for cities to ensure the sustainability and inclusiveness. However, without taking into account young people as the equal important partner, the cities will not run for future.

**Ensuring the all stakeholders (nationally designed in addition to all major groups and other stakeholders as recognised in Agenda 21) including young people to have a space in policy designing, implementation, monitoring and accountability is critically required.**

## Policy Recommendation

### - Issue Paper 1 “Inclusive Cities”

Although we hear the term “inclusive” bandied about, the New Urban Agenda must define what 'inclusive' means, as it remains unclear in this text. In this regard, the UN MGCY calls for the following:

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics Fact Sheet in 2011,  
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs26-2013-literacy-en.pdf>

- The issue paper on inclusive cities rightly addresses important aspects of economic systems that can potentially play a role in enhancing the inclusiveness of cities. However, the problem of inequality will not be solved without redistribution, which is designed to shift the wealth from rich to poor.
- Inclusiveness cannot take the form of including marginalized people to a pre-defined model for society. An inclusive city for sure means all people can access existing opportunity and infrastructure but also it must mean all people have access to spaces for expressing, views and ideas and are able to have meaningful participation in urban planning.
- Though "[The Right to the City](#)" is considered one of the Policy Units of this Issue paper, it is not mentioned once in it. In this sense, "inclusiveness" should mean the right to the city, which according to Article 1.2 of the "World Charter for the Right to the City", *"is interdependent of all internationally recognized and integrally conceived human rights, and therefore includes all the civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights which are already regulated in the international human rights treaties"*.
- We welcome the fact that this paper addresses stakeholders as "marginalised" people rather than "vulnerable" people. We strongly believe that vulnerability is caused by marginalisation socially, economically, or administratively.
- Parks and other public spaces are being privatized in cities around the world. Unfortunately, this paper does not address this issue. These spaces should be maintained for the common good through public ownership.
- It is potentially dangerous that the paper associates economic growth with inclusivity. Although growth can be a measure for progress in an economic sense, albeit an outdated one, it is certainly by no means an indicator of inclusivity.

## - Issue Paper 2 "Migration and Refugees"

- The administrator should give special attention to lodging process, which should be followed closely by child protection institutions. The accessible lodging process according to the international obligations each country is obliged to. In addition to that, to ensure the accessibility to all basic services, cities must take actions to mitigate difficulties for migrants, IDPs and refugees, through such as the national and local government need to guarantee the right to a legal representative (tutor) capable of chaperoning the minor throughout the refugee-status request/migratory regulation process.
- Regardless of migratory status, people must be guaranteed access to all social services and protections. This will ensure the access to not only economic opportunity but also social opportunities.
- Establish mechanisms to identify young/child refugees and individuals, as well as mechanisms to locate minor migrants' families (except in situations where the efforts to locate the family might put the minor or the family's lives at risk), as implemented by the United Kingdom.
- Although it is critical that creating the urban environment which supports or enhance the self-resilience of migrants and refugees by integrating the concerns they have, the missing piece is the recognition of collective resilience at local level. The resilience should not be relied on the goodwill of people, however, the well-being environment will be achieved a sounds and adequately close relationship of society.

### - Issue Paper 3 “Safer Cities”

- The concept of "crime prevention" should be expressed as "crime and violence prevention". This expression is better since some forms of violence are not considered a crime, especially when it comes to gender violence and street harassment, for example.
- Regarding gun violence, which causes 200,000 human deaths annually, strong regulation, such as registration of all individuals and the limitation of firearm purchases by people with criminal records, is essential.
- Engagement of the private sector is important, but its role should be clarified. In addition, the focus should not necessarily be on safety; it should be on solving the root causes of crime and violence, such as unemployment, marginalization, inequality, discrimination etc.
- We strongly welcome that the paper defines "Urban planning and design for social integration (gender and age inclusive and adequate public spaces)" as one of the key drivers for action and call for a "strong policy focus on the role of youth in local government safety interventions".
- We also recommend that the linkage between racism and discrimination and violence be better addressed. This is important to protect the right of people having different “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity” (SOGI) and ethnicities, for example, who suffer from crime and violence, such as homicide.

### - Issue Paper 4 “Urban Culture and Heritage”

- Culture and heritage are not limited to architecture and other human creations. Natural sites including mountains, forests, waterways and other biodiversity should be included and conserved. Access to this natural heritage is critical for the well-being of local communities.
- Respect and preservation of local culture can only be fulfilled in an environment of respect for cultural diversity, especially of migrants and minorities.
- Zoning regulations are needed to prevent unregulated tourism, which can potentially undermine and harm local life of all kinds, as well as negatively impact culture.
- Supporting local business enterprises to enable the tourism sector, especially eco-tourism, would produce huge opportunities for MSME and cooperatives. Community-led projects should be promoted and supported by public funding.
- Efforts to promote green tourism should be expanded, especially in developing countries.

# Area 2 “Urban Framework” Response

## Summary

### Importance of issues

Cities and human settlements are experiencing an increase in their youth populations. As a result, it is essential that cities recognize this demographic reality as a positive development, and take advantage of the energy of children and young people for positive, sustainable urban development. Young people must be included in urban governance and should be provided with permanent spaces for their participation. These spaces would provide children and youth a means by which they can affect policy and legislation and bring about an urban reality that more sustainable and inclusive of all social groups.

### Why are these issues important to young people?

The papers comprehensively address the realities cities face today. The views expressed, however, are obsolete in this era of sustainable development, which includes three pillars: social, economic, and environmental. To go beyond the status quo and to ensure sustainable urban development, the urban framework must operationalize: 1) Efforts to decouple economic growth and environmental degradation through taxation and credit-rating; 2) stakeholders’ engagement through the establishment of permanent, well-resourced spaces. Children and youth are often excluded when it comes to discussions around these topics. Efforts must be made to observe and operationalize the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup>, as well engage youth-led and youth-serving organizations, when attempting to transform cities and bring about sustainable urban development.

## Policy Recommendation

### - Issue Paper 5 “Urban Rules and Legislation”

As reiterated in the issue paper, urban rules and legislation are very often outdated and must be updated to reflect global best practices and sustainable urban development.

- **Urban Law:** This section captures the impacts of law on people, yet misses the mark in terms of the use “vulnerable groups.” It is better to use “marginalized groups” here as it more properly reflects the reality that groups are vulnerable because they are marginalized.
- **Good Quality Law:** All laws should undergo community-assessment to ensure that their economic, social, and environmental impacts are not adverse to all social and economic groups.
- As indicated in the issue summary, the review of restrictive, exclusionary and costly legal/regulatory processes would be meaningful. The idea of efficiency, however, should never be prioritized over effectiveness and equitability. This implies that blind-deregulation should not be promoted. Thereby, this process should make extremely clear that point 6 of “Policy” is not acceptable at all.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

- The architecture of the regulation concerning the building code and living neighbors should be coherent and designed to maintain and improve the quality of cities and the lives of those living in urban communities.
- **Rule of Law:** the important element of Rule of Law as well as of urban law is that people can easily take meaningful legal action against officials who do not function satisfactorily and/or violate a right or procedure which they are obligated to follow. The short-term and accessible procedure, which enables people under the jurisdiction of municipality to take meaningful action, is essential to have a public debate on all issues linked to their life.

#### - Issue Paper 6 “Urban Governance”

We strongly support the view that The New Urban Agenda will not work unless “All relevant stakeholders, under a strong leadership of the local government, will join their force and establish permanent structures of dialogue to make sure cities are places of opportunity for all.” We maintain these “permanent structures” should concern more than just “dialogue”, however; it requires permanent structures ought to promote and encourage meaningful participation in “decision-making,” which ensures the strong accountability in local governments.

- The scope of role of and impacts of urban municipalities includes other local authorities neighbouring the urban area. Therefore, the key drivers that strengthen ‘urban-rural linkages’ means: 1) to assess social, economic and environmental impacts of the policy of urban cities in the rural area around the cities. 2) to ensure the participation of stakeholders in rural area in its urban decision-making.
- Although the paper rightly addresses the importance of having fiscal resources by the local and subnational governments, it fails to raise the significance of decentralising the power of taxation. While taking into consideration of disadvantage of ‘horizontal imbalance’ among local authorities, Central governments should go further to decentralise the taxation to mobilise more revenues from untapped businesses and to, more importantly, hold the local government and politician accountable to citizens.<sup>3</sup> On average, the subnational tax share of total taxes in developing countries is only about 10 percent, or less than half of that in industrial countries will support the domestic resources mobilisation.<sup>4 5</sup>
- Reiterating the points addressed in this issue paper, establishing the permanent platform for all stakeholders at local and subnational level in policy designing, implementation, monitoring and accountability to ensure the meaningful participation and have an accountable, transparent and open decision-making.

#### - Issue Paper 7 “Municipal Finance”

The process, Financing for Sustainable Development is faced to the situation where it is asked to do more with less. To mobilise enough resources to implement, we need to utilise untapped resources of revenue. However, taxation and debt can be used to more effectively realise the three dimensions of sustainable development, particularly the environmental aspect. Since the

<sup>3</sup> <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/fiscal.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPREMNET/Resources/EP38.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTMMNGT/Resources/Municipal\\_eval.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTMMNGT/Resources/Municipal_eval.pdf)

issues are linked deeply to the discussion in the financing for development, our further detailed position on that is on [our website](#).<sup>6</sup>

- This paper fails to operationalise the notion to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, which is environmental aspect. The local government should introduce the **ETR - Ecological Tax Reform**<sup>7</sup> and **E-RISK - Ecological Risk Integration to Sovereign Credit**<sup>8</sup>. In reforming the tax, the system can reduce the cost of negative environmental externality, which has reached **6.6 trillion US dollar**, same as 11% of the World GDP in 2008<sup>9</sup>. Both strongly support the local, subnational, and national government to mobilise more resources domestically as well as to stop the erosion of efforts of development.
- We welcome the questions regarding the second issue in “Bridging shortfalls in endogenous resources”. While taking into account that people having old and rare houses are keeping a good scenery of towns, which are also attractive assets for tourism, in many historical cities, we need to find a balanced and equitable approach to taxation on those assets.
- Commenting on “Improving outdated governance systems”, the transfer of resources should not only based on population, but also on influence on social, economic and environmental aspects. And the transfer, especially in developed countries, should not be only occurred vertically, but also horizontally. As the matter of facts, the rural areas are victims of globalisation which enhances the attractiveness of growing urban area and extracts people and put the compensation on. Having in mind that there is a huge number of people eroding to cities to sustain the development, redistribution of wealth and share the responsibility to recover the environment should be implemented.
- However the infrastructure is critical facility for development and achieving the fulfilment of human rights, such as right to education, health, water and sanitation, and other basic services including mobility, as many cases have proven, the infrastructure would potentially undermine the livelihoods and lives of people themselves. In addition, Public Private partnerships (PPP) are encouraged in the context of building infrastructures to mobilise finance, yet no caveat is there to raise the awareness that those money will go to those projects which are attractive to private sector resulting in lacking of finance for people in needs at most. While understanding the importance of private sector to be engaged, it is extremely important that before any partnerships being formalised, they should go through the communities assessment in social, economic, and environmental aspects.

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<sup>6</sup> The UN Major Group for Children and Youth Priorities for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development <http://childrencyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FFD-Priorities-for-MGCV-2.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The concept of ETR relies on shifting the tax base from a value added (labor and capital) basis to “that to which value is added,” namely resource extraction and depletion, along with pollution. This tax shift puts a price on the environmentally damaging activities that result from the production processes, such as pollution.

<sup>8</sup> “A New Angle on Sovereign Risk”, UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative, 2012  
[http://www.unep.org/PDF/PressReleases/UNEP\\_ERISC\\_Final\\_LowRes.pdf](http://www.unep.org/PDF/PressReleases/UNEP_ERISC_Final_LowRes.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The report by United Nations Principles for Responsible Investing (UNPRI), 2008,  
<http://www.unpri.org/press/pricing-environmental-damage-28-trillion-by-2050-2/>

# Response to Area 3: Spatial Development

## Summary

### Importance of issues

The New Urban Agenda should make efforts to conceptualize and create mechanisms to measure the success of places, in order to learn best practices. While understanding that cities are complex, intricate, and living organisms, metrics are necessary to be able to gauge the various indicators of success for planning policies and projects.

### Why important for young people?

In order to fully achieve and implement an ambitious urban framework, the UN MGCY calls for young people to be included in an open, transparent, and decision-making capacity in the conception, implementation, and monitoring of the spatial planning and development processes. A galvanize youth population that understands the importance of good stewardship is central to sustainable urban development.

A robust and ambitious urban framework can be achieved through policies that:

- *Recognize* young people, especially young girls, as a historically marginalized demographic group
- *Create* and strengthen *genuine* decision-making roles for young people in all stages of planning and spatial development
- *Build* human-oriented settlements that are sustainable, inclusive, and resilient
- *Empower* place-making and ownership by communities, understanding that equitable and safe public spaces are platforms for civic participation, collaboration, and relationship-building
- *Recognize* the challenges and opportunities provided by rural and peri-rural areas, in order to better promote sustainable urban development
- *Promote* form-based zoning and mix-used development in lieu of conventional zoning

## Policy Recommendation

### - Issue Paper 8 Spatial Development

Historically the spatial planning and orientation of cities and its spaces have been completed in a compartmentalized and a la carte basis. Urban planning efforts have been reactionary processes to the growth and migration of people within and outside of the cities, and resulted in the planning profession primarily assuming the role of zoning administrators. It has become increasingly clear that spatial planning and its realization can both negatively and positively impact the social fabric of city and that the lives of city inhabitants need to be an important factor in the planning process. That being said, young people need to be better recognized as important



stakeholders and decision-maker in the construction and implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

- To echo the consensus within the policy papers and the outcomes of the seventh World Urban Forum<sup>10</sup>, much of contemporary planning has lost the human scale and, in turn, has prioritized the metrics of the automobile as the centerpiece for planning policies and practices. This has resulted in sparse settlements that consumes higher proportions of land and resources, and contributing to the weakening social fabric of everyday lives.
- Smart density that respects natural resources, preserve the character and integrity of the land and space, and integrates the cohesion of social, cultural and political divides will positively augment the quality of life for urban inhabitants, reduce the negative effects of gentrification, and secure sustainable urban development.

#### - Issue Paper 9 Urban Land

In areas where there is haphazard zoning and poor planning, there exist cases of mass informal settlements. This happens, as the policy papers recognize, because the “plan” has no space for the mass migration of people into the city.

- Cities must have plans and safeguards to provide people with adequate shelter and necessary services, such as health care and safe drinking water.
- They must also work to recognize the legitimacy of these settlers and provide them with opportunities to claim de facto ownership of land when the city is unable to properly plan space for these vulnerable populations. Lack of housing security and slum-like conditions contribute to low security for many populations, particularly for young people. Cities must work with, rather than against, informal settlements.

#### - Issue Paper 10 Urban Rural Linkages

As rural populations continue to migrate into the city, it is necessary for planning policies and practices to maintain the integrity of the rural land, including its landscape, resources, and way of life.

- Differing rural regions have different sets of problems, including but not limited resource-based, amenity-based, or informal settlements in many underdeveloped regions. Understanding the rural character and infrastructure will be integral in responding to the needs of those who migrate into the city. While rural areas may be seen as having smaller sets of problems compared to their more urban counterparts, these rural areas also have less resources and human capital to deal with these problems.
- Urbanization of rural land has proportionately affected the agriculture industry. This is particularly important when it affects local farmers and producers, who are finding that year by year, they need more and more acreage of lands to produce the same net income to maintain their way of life. In the United States, the success of rural and small towns have depended on the farmers; however, in contemporary time, this is reversed. Small farmers now depend on the success of towns to maintain their way of life. Without easy

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<sup>10</sup> <http://wuf7.unhabitat.org/wuf7-reporting-and-conclusions>

access to essential services that towns can provide, small farmers and producers will be more compelled to move into the city.

- Dialogues on the rural landscape need to be better emphasized in the policy papers and in the New Urban Agenda so that decision-makers more comprehensively understand motivations behind the migration into cities, in order to both provide these services, as well as to plan for decentralization.

#### - Issue Paper 11 Public Space

Migration of people into the city will continue to shape the planning and allocation of space. Cities are not just a place of congregation, but rather institutions with the power to contribute to the human experience of those who choose to reside within them.

- People-centred planning approaches that begin on the ground-level, rather than from a bird's-eye view, will be instrumental in ensuring that outcomes of deliberations truly reflect the wants and needs of individual communities, while keeping in mind the needs of future generations. As part of this process, urban areas need to increase place-making efforts in a way that promote dialogue, respect and interaction between people from all facets of lives. The economic dimension has been rightfully discussed in the Habitat III papers and is an important building block to facilitate cross-sectional partnerships in creating, maintaining and securing public spaces, because planning is not a solitary enterprise.
- The past century of planning practices, which have included the destruction of functioning public spaces, have contributed to the mechanization of the human life. In the United States, Americans are becoming increasingly disconnected from one another and within social organizations. Developing countries will experience the same patterns, unless they take caution from mistakes of the developed world.
- In order to promote dialogue and increase civic participation, communities and public spaces must be designed in a manner that encourages real-time personal interactions. This can be achieved through place-making and, when place-making is done in a genuine, inclusive, and participatory way, it will lead to ownership by the community. Much of public participation in planning decision-making is out of formality rather than out of concern. That being said, genuine participation needs to be better emphasized in the New Urban Agenda, and governments must strive to encourage and promote civic participation in place-making by updating zoning regulations and holding public forums. Once this is accomplished, it will promote dense settlements that encourages alternative forms of transportation, such as walking and biking, which will provide people with the opportunity to stop and interact with others in daily functions. The automobile does not enable such opportunities.
- Public spaces violence should be given a special attention, and no form of violence can be legitimized or naturalized, as it is often the case of street harassment.

# Area 4 “Urban Economy” Response

## Summary

### Importance of issues

Urbanization plays a catalytic role in transforming and revolutionizing the modern world. It has spatially reorganized the global landscape, restructured political institutions and transformed the world’s economic system. As urban space and opportunities for livelihoods diminish, the urban economy needs to be revitalized to involve Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS), particularly those from marginalized sections of society, to be part of an inclusive, participatory process to optimization of opportunities and even, the stimulation of new ones.

### Why importance for youth?

Young people in cities constitute a large, yet under tapped resource it is imperative that a conducive enabling environment be built to inculcate and incubate local skills and talents and incorporate and assimilate them to the local urban economy, as a means to increase that city’s competitiveness, keeping it on the path towards sustainable inclusive development.

## Policy Recommendations

### - Issue Paper 12 “Local Economic Development”

The proposed model of LED positions economic development in such a manner that stimulates urban economies by building on their comparative advantages and unique characteristics. However, the lack of real time examples of LED-based best practices from cities around the world or how the LED model facilitates youth engagement and bridges the gender gap, forms a policy gap.

However, for its success, this model should ideally comprise of the following,

(a) Improving youth capacities – in terms of developing skill sets, and preparing youth for the workforce. This means that:

- The gross investment in skill-based education gap must be closed in order to ensure that youth are given appropriate opportunities to thrive in a competitive setting.
- Good-practice programs like the National University Students’ Skill Development Program (a Tata Institute of Social Sciences initiative) must be adopted and adapted to other levels of education to prepare the youth for the workforce.<sup>11</sup>
- Skill training and capacity building for youth should be built around the “*comparative advantages and unique characteristics of cities*”. However, local and regional planners must be careful in avoiding the Russian *monotown* phenomenon. Hence, a more sustainable model of LED would be to encourage the proliferation of diverse sectors within the city economy and work towards building youth capacities accordingly.

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<sup>11</sup> National University Students' Skill Development (NUSSD) Programme <http://nusssd.tiss.edu/>

(b) Improving service infrastructure to support youth access to opportunities (employment and education). A LED based economy needs the supporting service infrastructure to attain sustainable development. These service infrastructures include:

- As space shrinks with the growing population, much of the urban population is pushed into informal housing. Slums, the harsh outcome of unchecked unequal growth, inequalities of income and irregularities in planning, have become a standard feature of the city space (note: *the existence of third world spaces in first world neighborhoods*). Local and regional governments would need to implement effective pro-poor slum rehabilitation policies in particular and proper housing policies in general, for the LED to be a success.
- Mobility, another area of concern, needs major upgrading even as families move farther away from city centers to suburbs (see the *Burgess Model* on spatial expansion of the city<sup>12</sup> – CBD to outer residential spaces). Regularity, efficiency, and ease of access and use should be the cornerstone of transportation infrastructure.
- Improving sanitation facilities must be a priority to ensure youth, especially young women, are given access to opportunities (studies point out to the link between the two<sup>13</sup>). Furthermore, proper sanitation facilities reduce the precarious living conditions in cities, particularly in slums.

(c) Enhancing and expanding opportunities for youth and children's creating opportunities for livelihoods has the potential to enable inclusive sustainable development that To enhance and expand opportunities, governments must:

- Encourage businesses to adopt more pro employment policies to their business models in an effort to tackle urban unemployment
- Ensure progressive policies aimed at redistribution in order to reduce inequalities.
- Support enabling environments through regulation and incentives that take account for all dimensions of sustainable development and create opportunities for livelihoods. Collaborate with businesses and educational institutions to create programs and schemes that would result in paid internships and placements opportunities for the youth.
- City-level scholarship programs have the potential to boost school enrollment and support students from poorer backgrounds<sup>14</sup>. Access to quality education along with programs like the Government of India's mid-day meals scheme<sup>15</sup> boosts enrollment of children in schools and also provide for their nutritional needs.

(d) Encouraging entrepreneurship among youth. A distinguishing characteristic of youth is their inclination towards innovation. Innovation not only breeds better and efficient technologies but also allows for entrepreneurial opportunities:

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<sup>12</sup>Park, Robert Ezra, E. W. Burgess, Roderick Duncan McKenzie, and Louis Wirth. 1925. *The city*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>13</sup> UN OHCHR. October 2011. *Women and girls and their right to sanitation*.  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Womenandgirlsrighttosanitation.aspx>

<sup>14</sup> Norbert Schady and Deon Filmer, May 2006. *Getting Girls into school: Evidence from a scholarship program in Cambodia*. Policy Research Working Papers

<sup>15</sup> Mid-day Meal Scheme, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India <http://mdm.nic.in/>

- There is a need to tap into this arena as it can add to generating new employment opportunities and building newer businesses. This creates a vibrant environment of innovation and adds to the *competitive advantages* that the LED hopes to breed.
- It is necessary to create a conducive business environment for start-ups headed by youth. This would mean that governments and the businesses sector would need to invest in startups with “potential for excellence”.
- Microfinance and microcredit have a tremendous role in encouraging youth entrepreneurship in cities through small and medium enterprises and cooperatives. The Grameen Bank initiative in Bangladesh is an excellent example of creating decent livelihoods as a means of engaging young people in economic activities and bridging the gender gap.
- However, governments must be careful not to over-rely or over-emphasize entrepreneurship. Planners must look to entrepreneurship as complementary in nature. An economy excessively dependent on young businesses is not necessarily a healthy one, as it will be prone to instability and much insecurity. Instead, a sustainable LED model should encourage creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in a manner that will enhance the performance of the economy and which will benefit the city.

(e) Entrepreneurial governments. Quite rightly, it is the government that would play the most significant role in the success of the LED:

- However, governments and governance structures need major updating as well. Scholars like Osborne and Gaebler have called for ushering an entrepreneurial spirit into governance.
- An entrepreneurial government would go beyond traditional responsibilities and ideally reinvents itself as catalytic, community-owned, competitive, mission-driven, results-oriented, decentralized and market-oriented government.
- An entrepreneurial government however must continue to keep *citizens*, not businesses or clients, at the core of its policies, regulations and responsibilities. An urban economy led by an entrepreneurial government would increase its competitiveness, rework its business and societal growth strategies, and pave the path towards sustainable urban development.

### - Issue Paper 13 “Jobs and Livelihood”

There is a strong need to link employment to cities as the concept of *brain-drain* is a socio-economic reality. This is why there is immense need to create *indigenous employment opportunities within the city*, and reverse the brain drain trend. Additionally, a set of concrete strategies on livelihood generation needs to be implemented— including the role of governments in setting standards for “fair pay”.

It is important to note that job generation is the outcome of a planned set of strategies, of which include:

(i) Governments and their national urban policies: In addition to an entrepreneurial government at the helm, there is immense need for these governments to develop urban policies at the national level.

- National policies set the standard/targets for urban development – for each levels of governments to achieve. Decentralization of powers and responsibilities is another component for the successful implementation of the urban policy.
- A strong urban policy must cover all arenas of city life – housing, sanitation and access to clean water, transportation, energy consumption, health care and employment. Each arena of city life contributes to employment and livelihood in a tremendous way.

(ii) Encouraging equal growth: This entails,

- The need to encourage equal urban growth in other regions. This has multiple benefits in that it reduces the burden of population and competition for limited resources of mega cities; aids the burgeoning of sustainable urban revolution; and brings about equal growth.
- One important means to encourage equal urban growth would be to support the growth of satellite cities. Satellite cities are newer markets and do not struggle with job saturation levels as mega cities, hence there is more potential for employment opportunities. Again, satellite cities need to be encouraged to diversify their economies in a way that is healthy.

The *Decent Work* strategy hinges on development through jobs. However, Decent Work can only be successful if the conditions surrounding the strategy are conducive including a democratic setup, welfare policies and a strong emphasis on worker rights.

More room for women, particularly young women, must be made in the DW strategy as well. This means addressing women’s concerns in employment including gender equality and gender representation in bodies like trade unions.

In terms of youth and Decent Work, governments and other stakeholders have the responsibility to - direct national youth policies, provide quality education and training, implement effective pro-worker labor policies, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, protect young workers both socially and economically, and promote dialogue as a means to address and redress concerns.

#### - Issue Paper 14 “Informal sector”

The competitive setting of cities makes employment in formal sectors difficult, with fewer opportunities especially for the urban poor. More youth are being pushed into the informal sector as a result of unchecked and unbridled forces of urbanization and globalization. The informal sector, characterized by low income, low job security, absence of government regulation, social security and trade unionization, and no job benefits, is an expanding sector. Failure to address the informal sector or improving its “unsustainable” conditions would result in further social exclusion, decreased standards of living and unsustainable development.

The *youth bulge* can actually reverse poverty cycles and improve the level of average income per capita, thus becoming a demographic dividend. However, in reality large cohorts of young people are either unemployed or earn low income in informal sectors. Of course, the effects of youth unemployment and underemployment are not just experienced in the urban economy but also act as a potential threat to the political and social stability of the region.

Dealing with the informal sector is not as simple as formalizing it. The informal sector plays an important role in the urban economy. But the informal sector has been projected and portrayed as a precarious sector. However, focus needs to be given to the vibrancy of the informal sector as

seen in its entrepreneurial spirit, its flexibility, its convenience and its role in helping to young graduates gain on-field work experience.

So what can really be done for the informal sector? Instead of formalizing the informal sector entirely, entrepreneurial governments can work to establish safety nets and robust labour, and environmental standards (including providing health and life insurances facilities) to ensure that labor is not exploited in the informal sector.

Governments should intervene so as to allow for the unionization of sections of informal labor this constitutes a partial formalization of the informal sector. This prevents stifling the vibrancy of the informal sector, and directs the sector towards the path of sustainable development such that it upholds worker's rights.

It is necessary to address the existence and/or condition the informal sectors of cities in the Global North. When addressing them, the answer cannot be simplistic as blindly applying principles used to address the informal sector of the Global South, as conditions are drastically different in the two regions. Care must be taken to be culturally, politically and economically sensitive. Thus, planners must consider the economic structure of these economies, their political scenario and their level of development.

The State's presence, recognition and intervention in the informal sector would aid in protecting informal labor, while establishing robust standards for businesses. Targeted inclusive economic development strategies acts as the key measure to combat social exclusion.

### **Summing up: Connecting LED, Jobs and Livelihoods and Informal Sector**

Drawing from and building on David Harvey's concept, the critical factor that is central to the urban economy is the concept of the *Right to the City's Economy*. It is the RTCE that has the ability to harmoniously bring together a sustainable LED model, a reworked concept of decent work and the improved conditions of informal labor.

RTCE is, thus, a realization of,

- A. the priorities of the local and regional governments,
- B. the goals of people-centric businesses, and
- C. the aspirations of city residents, particularly youth.

It is imperative to enshrine the *Youth Right to City's Economy* in this regard. The YRTCE would essentially be an umbrella term that brings together opportunities, capacities, recognition and the delivery of commitment towards the youth priorities in the urban economy.

# Area 5 Urban Ecology and Environment Response

## Summary

### Importance of issues

The Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) needs to build consistent and resilient urban policy and implementation mechanisms that inform and enforce environment-friendly urban mechanisms. Urban systems, more than ever, need to sustainably adapt to ecosystems and the environment in order to resist natural or human-made disasters and climate change

### Why important for young people?

The worldwide population of youth has increased to nearly half world's population. In developing countries, especially places such as Africa, this percentage is well over 50%. The UN Population Fund estimates that the global population of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in 2014 to reach an historic high of 1.8 billion.<sup>16</sup> 89% of the world's youth reside in developing countries. In India alone, there resides 356 million youth<sup>17</sup>.

Most of the world's population, including youth, is moving away from rural area to more urban metropolises. Sometimes, it is difficult for cities to adapt to the migrations that result. An excess of people in specific areas can harm natural environments; this is problematic because responding to natural disasters will be more difficult. In some areas of the world--Africa, South America and the Pacific, just to name a few--are suffering the most from climate change and natural hazards. Those countries are most in need to adapt and develop more and (potentially) new disaster risk reduction management mechanisms, in order to preserve the urban system and beneficially use natural resources provided to them. This will help prevent the result of natural hazards.

Young people are the ones that will suffer in the next decades the consequences of today's natural ecosystems catastrophes and climate change effects in their cities. Young people of today is therefore the generation who must take responsibility and act and lobby as much as it can in order to make their voices and ideas heard to make this world a more sustainable place to live in the future.

## Policy Recommendations

### - Issue Paper 15: "Urban Resilience"

Each city and region of the world, because of their geography, demography, political and social characteristics, face different kind of hazards (natural, political, social, etc). We need to identify specific resilience behaviors for each city and region, based upon each area's specific vulnerability to hazards. In order to identify resilience strategies, it is important to analyze area-specific characteristics and vulnerabilities to hazards. Following this, there should be attempts to find solutions and build inclusive societal systems that are prepared to handle striking shocks and stresses This will help reduce the negative consequences that result. This will allow for a more efficient New Urban Agenda, comprised of three pillars: urban planning, legislation, and municipal finance, Young people should play a role in all aspects of developing and executing urban resilience strategies.

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<sup>16</sup> "Global Youth Population Swells to Record 1.8 Billion" by Dan Kedmey, The Time, November 18 2014, <http://time.com/3591947/young-people-united-nations/>.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*.



Resilience strategies should be treated in an integrated manner by government programs, policies, and action. They must be taken into account across other areas of government and not merely relate to policies focusing on environment and ecology. For example, health issues could be caused by inadequate infrastructure policies, such as breathing problems increased by policies that prioritize public transportation over human health concerns.

- There needs to be more investment and research in developing resilient urban infrastructure that make cities better able to react to natural and geophysical hazards caused by rapid changes in climate (e.g. floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea-level rise, increase in air temperature, etc.). Research can improve technological systems to help cities analyze and prevent the causes of natural hazards, especially in the most vulnerable cities or regions.
- We recommend standardizing finance from private initiative and small ad hoc donors. It is also important to note that while the paper states that resilience must be one of the variables to consider when investments are made, it does not go into detail about the minimum criteria to be adopted. It would be essential to create a set of guidelines.
- Youth as a major social group should be provided with adequate resources and structural support at local, regional, and global levels to participate in the decision-making and implementation of policies concerning urban resilience planning towards natural disasters and the environment. This can be done by presenting to youth new initiatives and projects. Youth should also be encouraged by adequate support to participate in the implementation and follow-up and review of these policies. Therefore, this will address the need of resilient and inclusive urban governance
- It is essential to establish health care systems that people have the option to participate in, in order to be prepared against (unexpected) biological hazards and their negative effects on urban development. The Ebola outbreak of 2012 in Western Central Africa is an example that shows why established healthcare is crucial.
- Improved urban resilience governance is significantly beneficial because it can promote transparency, accountability, and participation, and allow for more informed decision-making that actually implements risk reduction and climate action as a continuous process. Overall, governance systems provide greater opportunities for an integrated development approach.
- We should emphasize the importance that the civil society, mainly the youth, have to have guaranteed an active space during the policy, finance and other decision making process with regard of urban resilience.
- Migrants not only settle “in slums that are especially vulnerable to natural and human-made shocks”, they are often forced to settle in areas where there are biological hazards present, which is unacceptable. This must be addressed and resolved in order to ensure a comprehensive scope in all unsuitable areas.
- In the study mentioning how wealthier households are more resilient than poorer households and are therefore able to recover from shocks of all kinds much easier, there must be peace promotion, civic engagement and a more resilient healthcare system that is easily accessible and relatively affordable . This will allow for the buildup of a more full, resilient urban setting with reduced risks to man-made and biological shocks/hazards.
- Greater investments in understanding the causes and consequences of other shocks and stressors must also include biological hazards.

## - Issue Paper 16: “Urban Ecosystems & Resource Management”

It is important to recognize that within urban environments are ecosystems that can contribute to improving air quality, enhancing health, water quality and quantity, as well as increase food supply through the availability of green spaces.

There must be established city planning and management strategies to have more efficient urban expansions, as such expansions have major impacts on the ecosystems. Growing global populations in cities will require natural resources in order to sustain. Urban systems offers technological solutions for populations that are not as big of stressors on ecosystems because of the population density that characterizes urban areas. Additionally, there needs to be a mindset to change the way people behave and think in a more innovative way. When efficiency in urban systems exists towards population (public transport, etc), contribute to reducing human impact on local ecosystems & consequent hazards. Cities also have ecological considerations in their own governance and management, such as innovating mobility solutions (i.e. walking, cycling, and public transport).

- Launching environmentally-friendly initiatives and projects (i.e. promoting use of bicycles among youth) and other projects for reducing ecological footprints is recommended. There should be promotions of activities to raise awareness of our relation with ecosystems, our impact on ecosystems, and what we as people can do together. The local and national governments should promote youth-led activities in their respective areas as well. The country’s government (and mostly in countries whose urban areas are highly dependable on their respective ecosystems), should also include youth in decision-making processes, such as encouraging youth to participate in national consultations and the implementation of policies. Youth must be identified and promoted as a crucial stakeholder group.
- The aforementioned initiatives should be done on a case-by-case basis for each a city/country/region because the ecosystem of each area varies.
- Sharing good practices, knowledge, information (data) and need of more transparency towards youth groups. How could we work together and our role in contributing to a new model of urban development (and then for a sustainable development (post-2015 framework).

## - Issue Paper 17: “Cities and Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction”

In a society where populations are more urban-centric than rural-centric, cities should be obliged to outline their own action plans and goals to fight against climate change. These strategic plans can include, but are not limited to: reducing the emittance of greenhouse gases (GHGs), establishing climate-resilient spaces, and encouraging positive behavior changes of those living in urban areas. The City of San Francisco exemplifies many of these practices, from banning the sale of single-use, plastic water bottles on city property, to charging consumers for the use of plastic, grocery-style bags.

- Research needs to be conducted on the role and positions of developed and developing countries facing the relation between their respective ecosystems and urban areas. In-depth studies should be conducted--taking into consideration unique characteristics of each city/region--that provide numerical data and data relating to quality. Additionally, such data that is generated should be disaggregated and considered to be transparent to the public.
- There should be promotions of skill and expertise transfers from country to country and city to city. National and local governments should support, motivate and facilitate the participation of civil society and partners (young people/youth organizations included) to

initiate suitable actions (education activities, for instance) on friendly-environment ways of living in a city since the way of living has a huge impact on ecosystems.

- We need more local initiatives for that: role of education of cities and local communities (role of partnerships is very important). Empowerment of local action (supported by the national/local government) and facilitate a greater implication of civil society (e.g: climate change / disaster risks awareness and education campaigns, etc).
- The issue paper also mentions that there exists “a gap...in translating [such] knowledge into practice, particularly in planning local, regional and nation[al] urban development policies and practices.” We need to encourage youth from all around the world to participate in decision-making and knowledge-sharing platforms. Youth that participate in such activities should then be responsible for sharing this information with people in their respective communities.
- Expansion of urban areas should be done simultaneously while taking into account the potential of natural hazards/disasters. Ensuring that infrastructure is well-established during emergencies is imperative because the impacts that result from such events will be much more dramatic on larger populations.
- We have to be more specific regarding reduction targets of cities, we should be more emphatic regarding the local leaders increase their climate leadership. The paper should force the local protagonism of the cities and would be great a position where the cities are more active in the climate related issues.
- There must be an understanding of the definitions of “hazard” and “disaster”. A hazard--including biological and man-made ones--a danger or risk, while a disaster is a sudden event that usually occurs because of a hazard and impacts a large number of people.

# Area 6 Issue Paper Response

## Summary

### Importance of issues

The importance of the subjects covered by the issue papers of *Area 6: Urban Housing and Basic Services*, cannot be overemphasized. The ability of an urban area, through its physical form, to provide for its inhabitants' needs, shelter, efficient movement, sanitation, and other concerns represent key human development and sustainability indicators.

### Why important for young people?

Children and youth may be said to be disproportionately impacted by their cities' housing, mobility options, and infrastructure broadly defined. As core services, these concerns limit or enable a city's inhabitants, particularly its youth, in pursuing economic opportunities, education, and the fulfillment of their basic human rights. A young person who lives far away from employment and educational centres, in poor housing conditions, without means of transportation, without basic infrastructure to deliver clean drinking water and other basic services, represents the sheer magnitude and chronic impacts posed by housing and infrastructure deficiencies.

As a whole, while children and youth are particularly vulnerable to the harmful aspects of urban informality and poverty, they are uniquely positioned to act as changemakers and leaders in guiding their cities towards a more sustainable future.

## Policy Recommendation

### - Issue Paper 18 “Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services, including Energy”

Issue Paper 18 provides a much-needed perspective on infrastructure: Infrastructure not only includes physical assets, but also relevant and interrelated institutions and knowledge. This point of view, with its holistic approach, lends itself naturally to local capacity-building. The knowledge aspect of infrastructure must be treated with particular sensitivity: Governments and their respective agencies must appropriately acknowledge and address local, indigenous, women's and youth perspectives in decision making processes relevant to infrastructure in order to provide for sustainable outcomes.

Energy as a subject merits a separate issue paper, in order to ensure full discussion that appropriately captures the depth and urgency of the need to move towards more sustainable urban energy sources. Related to this, there should be a fuller discussion of the nature of infrastructure systems' interrelation and interdependency, especially as it relates to energy. Infrastructure systems' resilience in the face of natural disasters and continued environmental and fiscal sustainability, must be assured.

### - Issue Paper 19 “Transport and Mobility”

Issue Paper 19 lacks sufficient discussion of a number of important themes relevant to transport and mobility.

- Transportation should be viewed in the context of facilitating security (police), health (ambulances), resiliency (fire brigades), access to employment, and other necessities in urban areas;
- Active transportation particularly requires additional attention, what with its capacity to reduce congestion, pollution, and to further social equity;
- Other innovative transportation strategies should be explored fully by local governments, for example: subsidized public transport for young people and dedicated roadways for public transport vehicles; and
- Finally, in light of calls to build “compact cities,” local authorities must be prepared to address the projected future increases in the number of private vehicles in urban areas.

#### - Issue Paper 20 “Housing”

Issue Paper 20 highlights the need to provide for a spectrum, or “continuum”, of housing choices in order to adequately respond to the diverse needs of cities and their residents.

- A variety of types of tenancy and occupation should be provided for in order to give residents of a given urban area an optimal amount of choice. For example: freehold ownership, leasehold tenancy, and collective ownership;
- Provision of housing for particular populations, including young people (for example through hostels and student accommodations), and refugees and internally displaced persons must be addressed by local housing strategies; and
- As noted earlier, due to their rapid growth and development, children and youth are disproportionately impacted by the quality of their surroundings. Housing is no exception; thus, the provision of housing should be approached with this understanding in mind.

#### - Issue Paper 21 “Smart Cities”

As Issue Paper 21 notes, the provision of basic services in urban settings increasingly relies on ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies).

- The integration of ICTs into service provision has been brought about by increased innovation and as well as pressure to find greater cost and resource efficiencies in the operation of infrastructure;
- To enhance ICTs’ role in the development of sustainable urban regions, the accessibility of technologies must be prioritized through initiatives such as free wifi zones and enhanced cellular subsidies;
- The concept of a “smart city” should be defined broadly as one where citizens are engaged in physical and service planning, evidence-based policy making is practiced, and ICTs (Information & Communication Technologies) are leveraged to better understand the needs of urban populations, possible solutions, and greater efficiencies in service provision, among other characteristics; and
- To echo the issue paper, a “smart city” should not be viewed as a destination but a rather a set of principles to aid in guiding cities towards a more sustainable future.

#### - Issue Paper 22 “Informal Settlements”

Issue Paper 22 highlights the difficulties of addressing informal settlements, and the chronic nature of the problems they pose to their urban regions and inhabitants.

- Youth in particular are vulnerable to the challenges posed by informal settlement patterns;
- Access to services and economic opportunities for youth should be fully explored as both an effective preventative and relief measure to curb the growth of informal settlements. By providing such resources, young people may be empowered to improve the situations of their families and communities, greatly reducing the costs of expanded informal landscapes to the world's economies and governments.





UN Major Group for  
**Children and Youth**  
the space for children and youth in the United Nations