
SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION

Sustainable urbanization is increasingly recognized as a crucial issue for the coming years due to rapid urbanization, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

However the sustainable urbanization agenda cannot be developed without taking into account the territory in which global urbanization will have impacts: it must overcome the dichotomy of rural versus urban, and ensure cohesion among territories within the important metropolisation processes that are taking place.

Urban governance

Good urban management needs decisions taken by local governments to be well articulated, to work in closer partnership with other levels of government and to count on clear proceedings of communication and participation of local actors, including the private sector. Considering the diversity of the territories, urban governance needs an integrated approach for large urban areas, and a targeted national and regional policy for intermediary size cities, that require a context of connectivity and articulation.

The consolidation of such a multi-level governance framework and the promotion of a more encompassing global partnership necessitate acknowledging the fact that local authorities, as key institutional vehicles of cities, have transcended narrow local political confines to become prominent players exerting regional and global influence.

Nevertheless, in many developing countries, local governments cannot fully assume their powers and responsibilities as a result of incomplete or ill-defined processes of decentralisation, inadequate resources and/or local capacities, but also due to sector-specific policies of the central government.

The post 2015 agenda needs to **promote stronger support to effective decentralization to strengthen city management and a new urban partnership to develop a multilevel governance framework**, based on **national urban policies**.

Social Inclusion

The fundamental purpose of governance is to work towards a healthy, safe, tolerant and creative society, ensuring the universal enjoyment of culture and its components, and protecting and enhancing the rights of citizens.

Given the increasing diversity of their population, and ongoing migrations towards cities, local and regional authorities must commit to the promotion of culture as a vital part of development and as an unavoidable prerequisite for a diverse and peaceful society.

Furthermore, inclusion policies should guarantee universal access to basic services and the safeguard of citizens' rights; guided by the values of equality, solidarity and respect for differences.

Urban planning

This new urban partnership should contribute to **promoting strategic urban planning** as a way to engage a wider platform of stakeholders in the development process of the city. This can also allow emerging leaders to build a vision for the future of the city by effectively

responding to the demands of urban growth and local actors, articulating physical, economic, social and cultural dimensions, and mobilizing local and national resources to improve the quality of life and promote territorial cohesion. This is important especially for intermediary and peripheral cities, which are increasingly becoming place of short-term stay, where people come to look for job opportunities and services, frequently floating or settling informally.

Urbanization and the management of land remains a challenge especially in countries where land markets and regulations have only recently begun to be considered as threats and opportunities for development. The recognition of ecological and social function of land is of public interest. It is not casual that one of the most important competences of Local Government is land management. **Instruments enabling local governments to undertake long term planning and control of critical land resources** for agriculture (Food security) and environment (health and natural resources), but also to finance urban development as well as for efficient organization of urban services, should be explored.

Access to basic services

Support to 'slum' upgrading must remain a priority to build inclusive cities and improve the living conditions of the billion people living in informal settlements, lacking basic infrastructure and services. Most of the elements of an effective 'slum' upgrading initiative fall within the jurisdiction of local governments even if the specifics differ within different national frameworks. What has gone almost unnoticed is the extent of the improvements in provision of water, sanitation and solid waste collection and the scale of 'slum' upgrading in many Latin American and some Asian nations – in which local governments had a central role. Financial viability is the mayor challenge to service improvement and provision, not only because of the significant investments needed but also because of maintenance costs.

However, the public service agenda is not limited to partnership and access for the urban poor, as much investment is expected in improving, for example waste management, energy use and transport systems. Indeed the agenda of public services is highly dynamic, due to advancing evolution in demography, regular technological progress and the need to ensure disaster prevention.

Prevent climate change impacts and disaster risks

Addressing the urgent need to limit greenhouse gas emissions, prevent disasters and unlink development from rising environment degradation requires leadership, support and action from local governments.

The risks facing any city from the direct or indirect impacts of climate change and other disasters (for instance earthquakes) are rooted in local contexts – the site, geography, climate, population, lay-out, economic base... and in the quality of housing, infrastructure and services, as well as the general land-use management. As such it is also rooted in the quality of local government. Successful climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction – which itself needs the ability to change and adapt as risks change – depends on local governments and their capacity to launch coordinated responses across many neighbouring jurisdictions.

A very large part of building more resilient cities involves addressing the large deficits confronting many urban governments in basic infrastructure and services (lack of piped water, sewers, drains, all-weather roads, solid waste collection, emergency services and building standards). In high-income nations investments in infrastructure and service provision efficiency have the potential to show that cities, so often seen as the main drivers of rising emissions, provide new opportunities for greater energy and water efficiency, waste reduction and other measures that reduce emissions and consumption.