Sustainable Urban Development

The urban future has great potential for humanity, with its promise of greater and more equitable access to services, economic growth, improved environmental outcomes and human development. As highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda, “Cities are the world’s engines for business and innovation. With good management they can provide jobs, hope and growth, while building sustainability.” Over half of the world’s population now lives in urban areas, for the first time in human history – and for the first time in many developing countries. Based on current trends, by 2025, just 600 cities may generate 65 percent of world economic growth, 440 of them in emerging economies accounting for half of overall growth.

Many cities are however inefficient, polluted, sites of growing inequality and unable to respond to disasters and climate change. Along with the rise in the number of large cities is a rise in secondary urban areas. Growing levels of informal dwellers, high insecurity, increasing numbers of poor people and unemployment, obvious environmental stress and poor urban governance and management are common issues increasingly faced by cities around the world.

Sustainable and peaceful urban development requires change in the values of people and transformative policies at multiple levels of governance. Urban development globally has been too often predicated on discrete project interventions based on technical decisions. Creating sustainable and resilient cities and urban centres, however requires comprehensive urban policies that address inclusive governance, development of livelihood opportunities, innovative energy development and utilization, responsive service delivery and transformation of values and perspectives in the exploitation and management of resources.
It also demands a multi-sectoral approach, beyond environment or physical planning. A sustainable urban future requires a multi-stakeholder strategy, one that creates space for the private sector, civil society and communities, foundations, local authorities and other actors to work together and with government agencies for a more inclusive response. In an increasingly urban world, cities are central to global economic development, employment creation, and ending extreme poverty. The success of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be determined heavily in the world’s cities, resting on improvements in the quality of urban governance, sound investments, cities’ ability to innovate, and effective urban rural linkages.¹

In this context it is important to build on the work of urban poor groups that have launched successful initiatives, demonstrating the agency and capability of the poor. Some of them contribute to advancing the MDGs – e.g., halving the proportion of people without safe water and basic sanitation (by 2015) and improving the lives of at least 100 million “slum” dwellers (by 2020). They are also catalysts in driving long-term change needed in local governance, such as in increasing the capacity of local governments to work with and not against the urban poor in their jurisdiction.²

There is a growing focus on how urban governments deliver basic services to their citizens. The urban poor and others can hold government agencies to account for their policies, investment priorities and expenditures. Social accountability mechanisms involving urban governments and those who live within their boundaries can bring change on a scale that reduces deficits in infrastructure and service provision in urban areas.

Additionally, urban planning may well deepen inequalities if gender differences are not recognized and taken into account in urban plans and projects. Therefore, specific approaches are necessary to address gender equality and women’s empowerment in all aspects of safe and sustainable urban development and governance.

Despite the magnitude and urgency of the urban challenge, a possible Global Development Goal on sustainable urban development and human settlements will need much discussion before agreement. The discussion will also be in line with the post-2015 development context and in line with the 2016 Habitat III conference on Sustainable Urbanization, explore integrated approaches linking governance, economic, social and ecological dimensions of the urban challenge. It will also highlight initiatives of participants in sustainable urban development, explore new ways of building synergies for urban transformation and conclude with defined roles and initiatives for stakeholders.

Guiding questions

- What should we consider to be some of the key urban problems and challenges and to what extent have these been placed on national/regional/global development agendas to elicit the necessary attention from policymakers?

- Can a city that cannot govern itself be sustainable and resilient? How can different partners facilitate the setup of inclusive governance and management systems in cities and urban centres? How do we set up systems to ensure that community security priorities of the population are met?

¹ An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development: Report for the UN Secretary-General, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (June 2013)
² See for example, two recent UNDP papers commissioned from the International Institute for Environment and Development and Shack Dwellers International that look at engaging with the urban poor for governance and social accountability in urban settings.
• How can multi-sector partnerships contribute to empowering the urban poor and informal workers to participate in community and policy decisions that affect their lives?
• What specific approaches are needed to address gender equality and women’s empowerment in all aspects of the safe and sustainable urban development?
• How would changes in values, character and attributes of the city follow the transformational changes in the cities needed in order to enter the sustainability paths?
• Can discrete projects and interventions respond to the complexities of the city and urban development? Based upon our experiences how can the initiatives of partners be harnessed into collective action and policy for developing sustainable, safe and resilient cities?
• Given the magnitude of the urban challenge, is there a need to establish a global development goal for sustainable urban development? How will this galvanize stakeholders into action? And how do we guarantee accountability and data monitoring?
• How can the use of technology and innovation provide solutions for sustainable urban development? How do we scale up such initiatives to increase the impact?

Format
There will be a panel of four speakers in a roundtable/fishbowl seating arrangement to promote interactive debate. A moderator will ask two questions of each of the panelists. Their responses will be followed by open discussion.

Break-out session

Peace and Stability in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Background
Many countries face a multi-dimensional and complex risk environment from the overlap of conflict, violence, poverty and disaster. Addressing these challenges in the post-2015 development agenda will be critical as insecurities impede social development, are tied to economic cost, and as the perceptions of insecurity change the way people live their lives. Poverty will never be eradicated if people remain burdened by fear, insecurity, and vulnerability. The dramatic increase in urbanization, climate change, ecosystem degradation, migration, food insecurity, conflict and fragility, violence, and other unexpected shocks further underlines the urgent need to address this multitude of risks and insecurities in the next development agenda.

There is also evidence that show that without gender equity, the eradication of gender-based violence, the empowerment of women, and greater involvement of women in peacebuilding processes, the world will neither be able to address the drivers of conflict and violence nor guarantee accelerated and sustainable development.

While there is broad recognition that there can be no peace without development and no development without peace, some stakeholders are still hesitant about integrating peace and stability issues in the next development agenda; some expressing concerns over a securitization of development and others over what it would mean for state sovereignty. Concerns have also been expressed on the issue of monitoring and evaluation. As both vertical and horizontal inequalities and exclusions often are significant drivers of conflict, violence and vulnerability, data should preferably
be disaggregated by geography and demography, but this can be difficult to ensure in particular at the local level. Besides, only few states have national and local capacities to collect and analyze peace and stability related data.

The majority of foundations are rarely active in the immediate aftermath of conflict. However, there are a number of foundations that are getting increasingly involved in issues related to stability and reconciliation, as well as in gender and peacebuilding. This work is mainly being undertaken at the grassroots level, and evidence is emerging about the link between these interventions and sustained development progress.

Scope and Objectives
The breakout session is expected to highlight how different foundations have engaged in issues related to peace and stability from a development perspective and to engage foundations, civil society and member states in a discussions on the design and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, with the specific objectives to: (i) identify compelling evidence and raise mutual awareness on the nexus between development, peace and stability and its central role in the post-2015 development agenda; (ii) deepen the conversation on implementation modalities and capacities; and (iii) discuss the way forward for further dialogue and joint collaboration between foundations, the UN and member states on these issues.

Format
The breakout session will take the form of a moderated interactive debate to encourage an open dialogue on the issues. A short moderated panel discussion with representatives from foundations, civil society and member state will set the context for the session. This will be followed by a moderated discussion between the audience and the panel based on the below guiding questions. The moderator of the session will at the end of the session summarize the key points made and outline a roadmap for next steps, possibly including a modality for continued dialogue and proposals for joint initiatives.

Guiding questions
1. What are some key political issues to consider in the articulation and adoption of goals and targets on peace and stability, to ensure they are both politically acceptable and operationally feasible?
2. Imagine a new development model, which aims at a reduction of all forms of risk in a flexible and forward-looking way. What would it look like and what change would be needed in the way we plan and programme for development today?
3. What are some of the key issues to consider in order to frame a post-2015 development agenda that ensures peacebuilding and peace deliver for women and men, girls and boys and what needs to be measured to ensure the agenda addresses vertical and horizontal inequalities in this regard?
4. What are the key capacity issues we may confront in terms of data measurement and analysis, and what needs to be done at local, national and global level to enhance the capacity to gather, share and analyze data on these issues?
5. How can foundations engage as partners with the UN and its member states on these issues?
Break-out session

Environmental Sustainability, Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction: Resilient Communities within Planetary Boundaries

There is an increasingly vocal discourse on embedding environmental sustainability in global development, recognizing that current responses fall short. Consistent with commitments made at Rio+20, there was a call to action from the global post-2015 thematic consultation on environmental sustainability for integrated development, inclusive growth (that is equitable and human rights based) and resilient communities living within planetary boundaries. Consultation participants shared a sense of renewed optimism that we have the knowledge, capacity and ambition to redirect our development trajectory towards common objectives. Yet the increasing threats to development from climate change mean that urgent action is needed, many participants of the consultation highlighted climate change as a source of instability that will lead to resource scarcity, mass migration, disruption of livelihoods and production.

Four areas were seen as integral areas of engagement to shift our development approaches and these included: 1) economic transformation; 2) governance and accountability; 3) local action and empowerment and 4) education.

This breakout discussion will examine how environmental sustainability and inclusive growth can be translated into national action with a focus on transforming economic growth, promoting gender equality, and examining roadblocks and areas of contention which need to be overcome to achieve poverty reduction. Specially, the session will touch on the ways that philanthropy, in close collaboration with civil society, governments, the UN and other partners, can contribute to driving this transformational change.

This session will focus on shifting growth models for economic transformation that is environmentally sustainable, gender equitable, inclusive and pro-poor. Some of the fundamental areas where the exchange of ideas and collective action are needed will be discussed, including:

- moving beyond GDP to value the cost of natural resources in national accounts
- ensuring private sector interests factor in and are accountable for the cost of social and environmental impacts (including impacts on natural resources and livelihoods).
- governments commit to developing a green economy with sustainable production and consumption, with a focus on how the green economy can support all three dimensions of sustainable development
- civil society and philanthropic organizations engagement in implementation and driving change
- women’s empowerment and gender equality as a driver of environmental sustainability

Guiding questions

- How can human rights based approaches effectively address competition for access to resources for the poor and marginal groups (e.g. women, children, indigenous peoples, disabled people, etc.)that, take explicit action in achieving what many constitutions around the world have already proclaimed the rights of people to a ‘clean and healthy’ environment. How can growth models be made more accountable and incorporate a human rights based approach in this regard?
• Is green growth enough for the future of the planet? What needs to be done by the international community (and Foundations) and countries (both developed and developing) to assist in making growth greener, gender equitable, and focused more on addressing sustainable development equitably across all three dimensions?
• Given the role of governance of natural resources and environment in many countries is weak, what can be done to strengthen the integration, sustainability and inclusiveness of environment and development in national contexts, wherein all stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups (e.g. women, children, indigenous peoples, disabled people, etc.) can participate fully and benefit equally?
• Which strategies to promote women’s empowerment and gender equality have been most effective in influencing a more sustainable development paradigm - how can they be scaled up in a post-2015 agenda?

Break-out session

**Fostering stakeholder participation for transparency and accountability in governance processes**

**Introduction – Demands and new forms of participation**

The importance of civic participation was a recurring theme throughout the multi-stakeholder consultations on post-2015 priorities organized in countries worldwide by the United Nations Development Group. From water to food security to conflict and fragility to accountable governance, participants, many of them from civil society, called for empowering people to claim their rights, and participate in and influence institutions, policies and processes for sustainable development. In its report, the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda proposed a specific target (10c) “to increase political participation and civic engagement at all levels”. Foundations and their partners in civil society have played a key role in innovating approaches to accountability in many countries, both in service delivery and also in promoting political engagement. This session offers an opportunity to discuss the contributions of foundations to accountability in the post-2015 context and suggest some ways forward.

The Global Thematic Consultation on Governance considered civic participation as a cornerstone for holding governing institutions to account, fostering transparency, reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion, with a particular focus on groups that are marginalized because of gender, age, ethnicity, geography, disability, or sexual preference. A critical message from the governance consultation relates to the imperative for an approach to governance in post-2015 that is based on human rights, transparency and accountability, in order to ensure that governing institutions and development policies are responsive to the needs and expectations of people. Even though they were part of the Millennium Declaration, governance and accountability did not make it into the subsequent MDGs. Furthermore, the lack of accountability mechanisms in the MDGs was an impediment to progress towards achieving development goals. Human rights, transparency and accountability have always been cornerstones of support to governance. But for post-2015, these dimensions could be mainstreamed through specific goals, and through specific targets supporting areas such as basic service delivery. Then a more effective development agenda would require a
stronger accountability framework that must be ensured across sectors at all levels, from global to national to sub-national, and include States and non-state actors such as international organizations, multinational corporations, philanthropic organizations, civil society organisations and donors (bilateral, multilateral and international financial institutions). This was echoed by the Post-2015 High-level Panel, which further called for **accountability and transparency to be a central part of a global partnership for development**, underpinned by information and data that are open, accessible and easy to use.

The last few years have seen a surge in innovative forms of participation, often driven by new technologies - such as participatory and gender budgeting\(^3\), community score cards, public hearings, citizen juries – all which aim to increase government transparency, performance and accountability, monitor elections, report instances of corruption, violence, and rights violations, or shortcomings in the availability and quality of government services. Much of this innovation is driven by foundations. However, many governments in developing countries are still struggling with how to leverage these new tools effectively and respond to people’s expectations. And foundations sometimes struggle with how to make their successful innovations sustainable and get them to scale. Too often, increased demand for stakeholders’ participation and for governments to be accountable does not receive effective response from the public sector. Sometimes this comes is to do with lack of capacity, especially in post-conflict of fragile states, sometimes it is ineffective partnerships, and sometimes lack of political will.. The degree to which this is addressed by the government also depends on how active the CS and NGO sectors are in a particular country.

The Post-2015 High-level Panel also called for a “data revolution” that implies more evidence-based development policy-making and implementation, better availability of quality information and statistics and strengthened accountability of development stakeholders. Several international initiatives, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) indicate increasing appetite, from developed and developing countries alike, for approaches based on more information, data and transparency. These approaches imply a role for civil society in terms of oversight and monitoring of development delivery by governments at the national level and donors at the international level. Supporting these efforts also calls for enhancing civil society's capacities for evidence-based advocacy towards improved service delivery.

**Break out session on Governance**

It is expected that the session will shed some light on the role that Foundations have been playing (even if limited in scope compared to other areas of support) and their potential in ushering participatory, accountable and transparent governance in the Post-2015 development agenda.

After a review of the outcomes of the Global Thematic Consultation on Governance and the Post-2015 Development Framework, the break-out session will take stock of foundations’ ongoing efforts to support governance and participation, specifically looking into:

- Assessment initiatives such as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s governance Index,
- Ongoing efforts to improve data sharing and transparency by the Foundation Center,

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3 Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is government planning, programming and budgeting that contributes to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfillment of women’s rights. See [http://www.gender-budgets.org/](http://www.gender-budgets.org/).
• Support to financial inclusion done by the Better Than Cash Alliance or
• Regional philanthropic support to governance on the African continent, as supported by the African Grantmakers network and the Southern Africa Trust.

Innovative approaches supported by foundations to foster an enabling environment for civil society engagement, enhance people’s participation, address gender inequality and women’s empowerment, and improve governance processes will also be discussed.

In addition, attention will be given to how these approaches championing greater transparency and accountability can be applied to MDG-related areas such as service delivery.

Finally, discussions will also help identify possible avenues for further collaboration on the ground between foundations and beneficiary Governments, donors or multilateral organisations such as UNDP on how to strengthen governance optimize other development efforts in the new development framework.

Format
The session is designed as an interactive panel discussion, ( “talk show” style). After a short scene-setting introduction by the moderator and a representative from UNDP, 4 to 6 panelists will each be given 5 minutes to speak about their experiences, lessons learned, good practices and challenges in supporting better governance transparency and accountability. A moderator will then challenge panelists into a debate by asking specific follow up questions, while encouraging speakers to suggest concrete ways to follow up on the issues identified at the global and regional/field level. The moderator will then open the floor for discussion and participants will be able to ask panelists some questions as well as to contribute (concise) remarks.

The moderators will wrap-up the session with a quick summary of key points raised during the discussion and propose avenues for follow up at the global and field levels.

Guiding questions
• How are foundations currently engaged in supporting better governance? What are the priority areas of engagement in support of the governance agenda in post 2015 agenda at regional and global levels
• What are the biggest challenges in bolstering women’s meaningful participation in governance efforts at local, national, regional and global levels? Which strategies have proved the most successful and sustainable?
• How can foundations support the development of metrics to measure the improvement of governance?
• How can partnerships and synergies between governments, the UN system and foundations be strengthened to support better governance and in support of post 2015 development goals? In what aspects of governance is a partnership likely to be most fruitful? Accountability and participation in service delivery, for example, seems to be an area in which partnerships would seem to be particularly useful?
• How could these ideas be turned into practical ways forward?