

WUF9 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2018

On Monday, the last full day of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (WUF9), many special sessions took place, as well as dialogues, stakeholder meetings and side events. Participants discussed inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships, settlements for displaced persons, and food security through urban-rural linkages in the morning, and urban ecological landscapes, civic engagement, and 'housing for all' in the afternoon. In the evening, host country Malaysia welcomed delegates to a gala dinner.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

INCLUSIVE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER

PARTNERSHIPS: Julie Gichuru, news anchor, Kenya, moderated a panel comprising the governments of Cameroon and South Africa, and UN and civil society representatives. Panelists shared their experiences of building inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships and good practices, and identified which practices can be widely applied. They noted gaps in existing multi-stakeholder approaches, and highlighted possible actions to increase collaboration and accelerate implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

On partnerships at the global level, Christine Musisi, UN-Habitat, highlighted, among others: the World Urban Campaign, UN-Habitat's General Assembly of Partners, and the Global Land Tool Network as thematic networks that produce tools and approaches to solve critical sustainable development problems.

On key actions that ensure inclusive partnerships, panelists identified the importance of: informing those advocating for change how they can influence policy; seeing 'who is missing' from the conversation; providing access to data to all different levels of stakeholders; translating 'policy speak' for people on the ground; and co-creating a common vision with all relevant stakeholders and committing jointly to its implementation.

Panelists highlighted gaps in current practices, including: understanding how to transition from advocacy to implementation; jointly identifying priorities in order to co-produce the agenda for change; laying a foundation of horizontal decision-making platforms; managing people's natural inclination towards linear and hierarchical approaches; prioritizing open communication between decision makers and their communities, which engenders trust; and using knowledge and data to provide an evidence base for decision makers to act.

During the ensuing discussion, participants debated the possibilities for: tackling ideological asymmetries among stakeholders; strengthening self-organized groups and finding the resources to scale up their actions; and ensuring partnerships deliver on their original mandates.

RISK REDUCTION: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SETTLEMENTS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS:

David Evans, UN-Habitat, opened the session, underlining that he sensed a real desire for change at the Forum in how displaced populations are hosted, considering that the world is

experiencing the largest population movements since the Second World War. He stressed that poorer countries are unfairly bearing the brunt of hosting, and that the panel would not only look at how to integrate displaced populations into urban environments, but also at how settlements can be managed and improved. Moderator Brett Moore, UN Refugee Agency, introduced the panel.

Josphat Nanok, Turkana County, Kenya, said the Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei settlement should turn into self-sufficient urban settings, adding this would require moving from a humanitarian mindset to a long-term development vision. Wilson Sanya, Mayor, Koboko Municipal Council, Uganda, spoke of the challenges he faces in implementing the NUA, considering his community's proximity to Congo and South Sudan, with resulting influxes of conflict-affected people. He said that water scarcity was one of the biggest issues pitting host communities against refugees, calling for more support for urban refugees and for solutions that work for all parties. Fuat Ozharat, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, emphasized that, since 2014, Turkey has been hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. He described some of the innovative solutions his municipality has devised in response, including setting up the first and only Directorate of Migration in Turkey, which delivers social services, ensures coordination among 'municipal units' working with Syrian refugees, and cooperates with partner organizations. Ahmad Jawid Tahiri, Afghanistan Independent Land Authority, said returnees and internally displaced persons should be seen as opportunities for host communities rather than liabilities. Heather Fehr, British Red Cross, highlighted what can be done before disaster strikes, including working with meteorological centers to anticipate climate events and disbursing aid in advance.

URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES: TERRITORIAL

DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY: Thomas Forster, UN-Habitat, and Maruxa Cardama, Cities Alliance, moderated the session. Shipra Narang Suri, UN-Habitat, introduced the topic and Ismail Bakar, Secretary-General, Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, Malaysia, delivered the keynote address. Ismail highlighted relevant factors affecting food supply to urban areas, including climate change, food waste and competing demands for land, water, and agricultural labor. He called for policies to balance supply with demand more effectively.

Representatives of France, Germany, Malaysia and Palestine, as well as from the Network of Rural Women Producers, the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and several UN agencies made up the panel. Panelists underscored challenges to ensuring food security in both urban and rural areas, and offered strategies, including: establishing public-private-producer partnerships, where farmers work directly with investors; enhancing cooperatives to integrate farmers into formal value chains; changing consumer behavior to reduce excess

consumption; and introducing participatory processes to include farmers, especially women farmers, in urban planning, as they are often displaced by urban expansion.

Yves-Laurent Sapoval, Directorate for Housing, Urban Development and Landscapes, France, lamented the lack of attention paid to the process of suburbanization, calling the suburbs and the environment the 'silent losers' to urbanization. David Suttie, International Fund for Agricultural Development, highlighted the rapid growth of small cities and the current opportunity to introduce sound urban planning at an early stage.

Participants drew attention to issues including: balancing land-use demand for agriculture and urbanization purposes; the importance of transport in connecting urban and rural areas; and finding ways to ensure that food consumed in urban areas comes from sustainable sources.

Session organizer Stephanie Loose, UN-Habitat, concluded the event by underscoring that effective planning should result in 'urbanization for, not against, food security.'

URBAN ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES: ACHIEVING URBAN HEALTH ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE:

This session, moderated by Ming Zhang, World Bank, highlighted connections between the built environment, ecosystems and 'the urban metabolism,' and discussed how landscapes can serve as a practical and effective interface between them.

Raf Tuts, UN-Habitat, called for developing the symbiosis between nature and the city, including through bringing 'blue' and 'green corridors' into the city, working across traditional practitioner silos.

Esa Ahmad, Malaysia, described his government's aim to develop livable cities through ecological landscape approaches, including a policy setting the minimum standard of two hectares of green area within easy access of every 1,000 people.

Mauricio Rodas, Mayor of Quito, Ecuador described his city's rich biodiversity and wide range of ecosystems protected by a robust regulatory framework. He highlighted ambitious initiatives to plant over one million trees a year and to invest in innovative modes of low-carbon public transport.

Martina Otto, UN Environment, reminded participants of the burden placed on natural resources by increased urbanization. She urged compact, connected and mixed-use cities that utilize nature to improve human resilience, with links to nature through natural corridors.

Anu Ramaswami, University of Minnesota, shared research findings on linking natural and built urban systems to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On assessing the trade-offs between various sectors, she stated that a base of scientific evidence is needed to comprehensively inform urban developers.

Lu Yaoru, Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, Tongji University, explained the role that urban ecosystems can play in reducing the impacts of natural disasters and building urban resilience.

Participants posed questions about what innovative solutions can resolve the tensions between rapid urbanization and conserving natural ecosystems, and on whether baseline information on natural ecosystems within cities is available. A youth representative called for involving young people in discussions and trusting the next generation to develop innovative solutions that will consider nature as part of the urban landscape.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION:

Moderator Joan Erakit, writer, US, introduced the panel. Dorji Choden, Minister of Works and Human Settlement, Bhutan, described her country's development policies, which combine a 'people-centered approach' with an emphasis on decentralization. She highlighted Bhutan's Gross National Happiness screening tool, which is applied to test the impact of each proposed policy on citizens' wellbeing. Iye Moakofi, City of Francistown Council, Botswana, emphasized her country's political will to implement the SDGs and NUA, and the Government's creation of a national multi-stakeholder urban habitat committee and national steering committee on the SDGs. Mariam Iddrisu,

Mayor of Sagnarigu District Assembly, Ghana, described successes in involving local communities in the development process, for example, in cleaning and sanitation projects that are led and safeguarded by local communities. Dahlia Rosly, President, Malaysian Association of Social Impact Assessment, described a Social Impact Assessment tool that is being used in Malaysia to understand the impact that projects such as the construction of the Kuala Linggi Internal Port and East Coast Rail will have on communities. Joshua Maviti, UN-Habitat, explained the challenges of encouraging communities in Kenyan informal settlements to feel included in the development process, and spoke of the possibilities offered by social media. Marcus Nyberg, Ericsson Strategic Design, said digital technologies, such as applications and games, can help create open environments in which urban communities can develop solutions and participate in decision making. Mariana Alegre Escorza, Director, Ocupa Tu Calle, Peru, described a bottom-up initiative that created a public space in Lima. She said small-scale initiatives and organizations that link communities with other actors are important for implementing the NUA. Kareem Ibrahim, Takween Integrated Community Development, Egypt, highlighted that private sector start-ups also engage on urban issues, such as mapping Cairo public transport, thereby supporting 'the right to mobility.' Finally, Danilo Manzano, Dialogando Ando, Ecuador, described projects to mobilize Quito citizens in LGBT advocacy efforts.

HOUSING AT THE CENTER, AS A VECTOR FOR SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION: Steve Weir, Habitat for Humanity International, moderated the session, and Halimah Mohamed Sadique, Deputy Minister of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, Malaysia, delivered the opening remarks, underscoring the role that government must play in providing low-cost and public housing for the poor.

In a video message, Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, referred to homelessness as a human rights violation, underscoring that housing is a means to ensure security and inclusion and that policies must enable structural change. Weir acknowledged that cities are growing at an unprecedented rate, leading to a deficit in decent housing. Panelists from the city of Buenos Aires, the Government of South Africa, Cities Alliance, Housing Europe, and the University of Guadalajara shared good practices and experiences on the topic.

David Ireland, Housing Europe, explained that the most successful social housing developments are ones that have community involvement. He referred to homelessness as the 'canary in the coal mine' that indicates the stock of housing is insufficient. William Cobbett, Cities Alliance, called for governments to step back and enable 'people-centred housing' in order to produce the necessary housing units. He added that security of tenure, particularly when given to women, followed by government provision of services and the introduction of alternative credit, would help solve urban housing deficits.

Ahmed Vawda, Department of Human Settlements, South Africa, noted that many impoverished urban residents in his country have no choice but to live far from their place of work, thus shouldering an unfair burden of transport costs and commuting time.

Eduardo Santana, University of Guadalajara, detailed an innovative community and cultural project being built at his school, and distinguished between the construction of free-standing houses, which, he said, compare unfavourably with the consolidation of homes around education, community centres, public spaces.

Diego Fernández, Secretary of Social Housing and Urban Integration, Buenos Aires, explained his city addresses its systemic housing problem by redesigning the government structure tackling the issue, listening to the public, and financing development.

Weir concluded by urging reframing of the housing question, explaining that a commitment to ensuring an affordable and increased stock of housing would improve the quality of peoples' lives in cities.