Enhancing the capacity of local and regional governments for delivering the SDGs through a Whole-of Government approach, smart cities, enhanced infrastructure asset management and resilience, monitoring & evaluation and innovative finance and partnerships

Training event, 11th session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11) Katowice, Poland

Venue: International Congress Centre, Multifunction Hall, Room 7
Date: 30 June 2022
Time: 9:00 AM to 11:45 AM – Central European Summer Time (CEST: UTC+2h)

Background

Local and regional authorities were particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as cities and urban agglomerations were among the hardest hit at early stages of the crisis. Indeed, it has been estimated that 90 per cent of all reported COVID-19 cases during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in urban areas, where all sectors have been deeply impacted.[1] Local governments are playing a critical role in providing access to basic services in normal times and ensuring that the supply of these public services is continuous and uninterrupted in times of adversity. Given their closeness to the communities concerned and their knowledge of the reality on the ground, they are also very effective frontline responders in crisis response and recovery.

Beside the challenge of restoring life to normal, local governments who were often already struggling to maintain their services due to limited financial resources before the crisis, are facing additional challenges on several fronts. For instance, cities and urban areas are increasingly more sensitive to environmental problems and vulnerable to weather- and climate-related extreme events, which are getting more frequent and severe with climate change. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 90 per cent of major disasters over the last two decades have been climate-related disasters.[2] On the other hand, cities and urban areas are indisputably major contributors to climatic disruption and land and environmental degradation, which are making these human settlements and their population increasingly more vulnerable to the environmental problems and extreme events they are contributing to trigger.

Cities and urban settlements play an essential role in achieving sustainable development. They are at the core of major global frameworks, starting with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted in March 2015, which calls for supporting cooperation and mutual learning among local governments for disaster risk reduction. Six months later, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals were

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[1] United Nations (2020) Policy Brief: COVID-19 in an Urban World. Available at
https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid_urban_world_july_2020.pdf

[2] UNISDR (2015) The Human Cost of Weather-Related Disasters. Available at
https://www.unisdr.org/files/46796_cop21weatherdisastersreport2015.pdf

adopted with Goal 11 specifically aiming at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, followed by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted in December of the same year. Nearly a year later, the New Urban Agenda placed even more emphasis on the role of cities in achieving the SDGs, in line with the growing acceptance that about two thirds of the 169 SDG targets can only be achieved through the substantial involvement of local actors, particularly those in urban areas.[3]

There is little doubt about the potential of cities to support a swift and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and accelerate the implementation of existing international agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Cities have long been key players in socio-economic development and are also acting as catalysts for many aspects of sustainable development. They are incubators for knowledge generation and production, innovation in science and technology, as well as in governance, social development and even art and culture. Cities are also recognized for their leading role in generating national employment, productivity, and economic development, as they contribute over 80 per cent to global GDP[4].

However, for cities to contribute more effectively to the global sustainable recovery from the crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate the achievement of the international sustainable goals and agreements, cities must be able to fuel their own sustainable recovery and development. To do so, efforts should be forward-looking, and address the pre-existing and new weaknesses and issues that were revealed or prompted by the pandemic, in order to *building back*— and/or *forward— better* and foster a healthy, green, inclusive, resilient, innovative low-carbon recovery and development. This will also require rethinking our cities, their density, the way we plan, manage and even finance them, make them more inclusive, and improve access to adequate and affordable housing, water and sanitation, urban mobility, and other public services, to name a few. We also need to reconsider how we design our urban infrastructure, buildings, and public spaces to reduce their environmental impact, adapt them to climate change and make them more resilient to natural disasters and more supportive of sustainable lifestyles.

It is in this vein that the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) is proposing to hold the training event, titled "Enhancing the capacity of local and regional governments for delivering the SDGs through a Whole-of Government approach, smart cities, enhanced infrastructure asset management and resilience, monitoring & evaluation and innovative finance and partnerships" at the 11th session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11), which, this year is under the theme "Transforming our Cities for a Better Urban Future".

Objectives

This training event follows and builds upon previous meetings and capacity building activities that the UNOSD has organized in support of the localization of the SDGs over the years. These include the International Mayors' Forum, held in Vientiane (Lao PDR) in 2017, in Lilongwe (Malawi) in 2018, and particularly the past two editions (held online in 2021 and 2022), which were exploring strategies, measures and tools with the goal of enhancing local governments' knowledge and skills around essential topics to build back and forward better and greener from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and accelerating progress for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other related international agreements, including the New Urban Agenda.

Methodology

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[3] As reminded by the OECD, it is estimated that 65 percent of the 169 SDG targets could not be reached without the substantial involvement of local and regional governments. https://www.oecd.org/about/impact/achievingthesdgsincitiesandregions.htm

[4] The World Bank (2020) https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview#1

The training event will consist of formal presentations by international experts, scholars, mayors, practitioners and local actors followed by Q&A and discussions.

Target Audience

This training event (#39) of the 11th session of the World Urban (WUF11) aims to engage representatives of national, regional and local governments, academics, businesspeople, community leaders, urban planners, youth, and other interested stakeholders who are among the attendees of the WUF11.

Schedule and format

The training event is scheduled to take place in an in-person format only on **30 June 2022, between 9:00 AM to 11:45 AM** – Central European Summer Time (CEST: UTC+2h)

Venue

International Congress Centre, Multifunction Hall, Room 7. Please note that participation in the training event is free. Registration can be done at the entrance of the Venue, before and during the event.

Language

The training event will be conducted in English.

Organizers

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

Contact Information

For any questions or comments please contact **Mr. Jean D'Aragon**, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD at daragon@un.org; and **Mr. JinHyun Lee**, Team Assistant, UNOSD at jinhyun.lee@un.org

Draft Agenda
(subject to changes and adjustments)

Time	Activities
Thursday, 30 June 2022	
9:00 – 9:10	**Introduction** • **Mr. Jean D'Aragon**, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Facilitator of the training event
9:10 – 9:25	**Good Governance to Accelerate SDG Implementation at National and Subnational Levels** • **Lichia Saner-Yiu**, Professor, Organisation Development & Institutional Learning, President of the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND)
9:25 – 9:40	**Introduction to the Whole-of-Government Approach** • **Mr. Bokyun Shim**, Head of UN Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), DPIDG, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
9:40 – 9:55	**Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation**

	• **Mr. Prabin Maharjan**, Programme Management Expert, DPIDG/UNPOG
9:55 – 10:05	**Q&A and discussion**
10:05 – 10:15	**Local and Regional implementation of SDGs: An introduction to Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)** • **Mr. Jean D'Aragon**, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD
10:15 – 10:30	**Smart cities supporting an inclusive, sustainable and resilient society** • **Mr. Kazushige Endo**, Director, United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD);
10:30 – 10:50	**SDG monitoring and evaluation tools to accelerate actions at local level — Local experiences of conducting a VLR and building smart cities** • **Ms. Nana Urakami**, Researcher, UNCRD; **Honorable Mr. Toshihiko Ota**, Mayor of the City of Toyota (short video); **Mr. Akaoka Ken**, Director General, Global Network, International Affairs Bureau and Executive Director, Office of the City of Yokohama Representative to the Americas; Yokohama City, Japan (short video); **Honorable Ms. Xu Zhangyan**, Mayor of the People's Government of Quzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China (short video)
10:50 – 11:00	**Q&A and discussion**
11:00 – 11:15	**Impact Investment in Cities – Innovative Finance for SDGs Implementation at Local Level** • **Mr. Raymond Saner**, Professor, Organisation and International Management, Basle University
11:15 – 11:30	**Enhancing infrastructure asset management at national and local government levels for Improved service delivery and sustainable Development** • **Mr. Gustavo Goy Garcia**, Infrastructure and Project Management Specialist, The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
11:30 – 11:40	**Q&A and discussion**
11:40 – 11:45	**Closing** • **Mr. Jean D'Aragon**, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD