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WUF11 Highlights: Tuesday, 28 June 2022

On the third day of WUF, equity and affordable housing emerged across cutting issues in many sessions as participants gathered to discuss the challenges of creating equitable and resilient cities that are accessible for all. Roundtables of parliamentarians and ministers met in the afternoon to discuss their role in implementing the New Urban Agenda and take stock of implementation to date.

Dialogues

Equitable Urban Futures: Moderator Lara Kinneir, London Interdisciplinary School, introduced the session's first panel on the scale of equity. Naoko Yamamoto, World Health Organization, highlighted national-level policies to support local innovation and crisis responses.

Paweł Wdówick, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Poland, reminded participants that urban solutions, such as new modes of transportation, must be inclusive for people with disabilities. Renu Khosla, Director, Center of Urban and Regional Excellence, said urban inequalities must be tackled quickly before they become intergenerational and harder to address. Fabrice Menya Me Noah, Fonds Spécial d'Équipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale (FEICOM), underlined partnerships with beneficiaries as participatory urban development.

In a second panel on local governments and civil society achieving equity, Jan Olbrycht, European Parliament, focused



Naoko Yamamoto, World Health Organization, and Paweł Wdówick, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Poland

on collaborative partnerships between all levels of government. Elcio Batista, City of Fortaleza, noted that even in non-democratic national environments, local governments can make structural advances on issues of equity. Marc Workman, CEO, World Blind Union, said 15% of urban dwellers experience disabilities, citing participatory planning among the best practices to respond to their needs.

Chioma Agwuegbo, Executive Director, TechHerNG, spoke on educating women and girls in Nigeria on technology uses from the lenses of gender and security.



Participants listen to the intervention from Paweł Wdówick, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Poland



Maria Galino, Director, Urban Agenda

Building Resilience for Sustainable Urban Futures:

Moderator Krystyna Schreiber, Government of Catalonia, said resilient cities not only withstand adversity, but challenge underlining conditions. Daniel Wąsik, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, stated resilience creates the basis for long-term success. Mami Mizutori, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), called for immediate action to build urban resilience before the opportunity passes.

In a first panel on localizing resilience strategies, Noraini Roslan, Mayor of Subang Jaya, prioritized aligning of strategies when building for resiliency. Sergio López, Medellín, Colombia, highlighted new green spaces, transportation systems, education programmes, and efforts to end violence. Maria Galino, Director of Urban Agenda, detailed a “territorial perspective” that uses digital tools to help bring balance, prosperity, and equity to the region’s urban and rural areas.

Mohammed Ikbel Khaled, Mayor of Sousse, outlined challenges resulting from social change, economic crisis, sea-level rise, and migration. Vera Revina Sari, Government of Jakarta, said the city is using lessons learned during the COVID-pandemic to reduce environmental impact and build an adaptive, digital, fun, and sustainable city.

In the second panel on Policy Directions for Innovative Urban Solutions, speakers linked resilience and integration through regional coordination across borders, systems promoting solidarity, and non-linear, multi-level approaches. “Resilience is a real opportunity to integrate” and build capacities for development, said Walter Cotte, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. Ian McKinnon, Global Disability Innovation Hub, added it is imperative to take all citizens into account so that solutions for resilience include persons with disabilities.

Roundtables

Parliamentarians Roundtable: Moderator Siraj Sait, Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise, invited recommendations on enhancing parliamentarians’ role in sustainable urbanization. Rafael Tuts, UN-Habitat, encouraged discussions on collaboration with the executive branch and stakeholders.

Hanna Gill-Piątek, Poland, emphasized awareness raising and exchange of expertise between parliamentarians and citizens. Keynote speaker Peter Anyang Nyo’ngo, Governor of Kisumu County, highlighted parliamentary leadership, urban policy development, spatial and urban planning, and urban finance.

Sahar Attia, Egypt, said parliamentarians should monitor and report on alignment of national urban policies with the New Urban Agenda (NUA). Ganga Lal Tuladhar, Nepal, highlighted parliamentarians’ role in supporting low carbon investments and managing disaster risk reduction.

Camila Crescimbeni, Argentina, urged educating youth and decision-makers on the SDGs and the NUA, and including the private sector for greater social, economic, and environmental productivity. Daniel Uwadia Osayimwense, Nigeria, stressed rural development to reduce migration.

Summarizing the discussion, Attia highlighted, among other issues, the need to facilitate legislation for NUA implementation and inclusion of urban issues in parliamentary agendas.

Older Persons Roundtable: Panelists discussed age-friendly cities from the perspective of both built and virtual environments. They underlined the importance of accessible public spaces to promote dignity, autonomy, and ultimately human rights. Recommendations included participatory design processes to account for aging. Other important aspects included: the intersection of age and gender; the safety of older people; and the need for social connection. Finally, the discussion highlighted a gap in frameworks on the human rights of older people and called for a societal shift in mentality around aging. Rio Hada, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated “ageism is the root of age-based inequality.”

Ministerial Roundtable: Moderated by Achie Ojany Alai, Kisumu, Kenya, the roundtable included 25 presentations by ministers or ministerial staff. ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile outlined collaboration efforts with the UN Secretariat to increase momentum for NUA implementation. Mohd Sharif asked ministers to focus on: NUA implementation in SDG achievement; housing and social security; climate change; urban displacement; and finance.

Many ministers outlined national efforts to implement the NUA, including policy frameworks, programs, and action plans, voluntary NUA reports, and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and collaboration.



Moderator **Achie Lucy Ojany Alai**, County Government of Kisumu, Kenya

Ministers agreed that affordable and sustainable housing is not only key to many dimensions of sustainable urbanization, including social security, safety, and health, but also a fundamental question of human dignity. Several highlighted the need to meet rapidly growing demand for housing which has accelerated due to recent crises.

Regarding urban displacement, several ministers drew the link between rural development and migration, stressing that people everywhere must have access to basic services and safe housing. One minister reported on progress in rebuilding liberated territories to enable the return of internally displaced persons.

On climate change, participants showcased projects to increase green spaces and planting trees alongside efforts to support public transport in reducing emissions.

Several ministers discussed finance with approaches ranging from direct funding to incentivizing private sector investment, with some stating that housing must be integrated with economic development to ensure that new residents can find jobs.

Mohd Sharif lauded the efforts undertaken and appealed to ministers to “implement what you say you will implement, because our children are watching us.”

Persons with Disability Roundtable: Paweł Wdówik, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Poland, highlighted city dwellers and persons with disabilities are not homogenous groups. Via video message, Victor Piñeda, President, World Enabled, said 25% of those living in cities experience barriers based on disabilities or age.

In a first panel on stocktaking, speakers discussed the importance of: accessibility legislation and standards; genuine engagement of people with disabilities; and universal design in promoting equity. Several commented on the connection between mental health and urban design, with one speaker calling for cities to make services accessible for people with psychosocial disabilities instead of creating separate institutions. In a second panel on “building back better together,” speakers noted the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected people with disabilities and called for: the collection of disaggregated data to shape social policies; industries to build inclusive tech solutions; and tailored employment opportunities to reduce barriers to

access the labor market. Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, described progress made under the “Accessibility Plus” programme in Poland.

Special Sessions

Rebuilding Communities and Neighborhoods After War and Natural Disasters: This session emphasized people-centered approaches and heard from Ukrainian leaders, who stressed their commitment to rebuild their cities and country.

Speaking on video, Ihor Terekhov, mayor of Kharkiv, Ukraine, said that despite devastation to his city, “Kharkiv is still alive” and is working in partnership with the UN to spur redevelopment after the war. Rebuilding will emphasize green policies, accessibility, and new investment flows.

Other participants emphasized the value of grassroots efforts to connect Ukrainian refugees with their in-country hosts and the need for education and mental health services. Participants also said it is imperative to secure comfortable housing for refugees before the winter. Response efforts in Ukraine and beyond also need to build back jobs, green infrastructure, and physical and social capital to improve conditions for refugees to return to their countries.

National Urban Forums – Strategic Platforms for Implementing the SDGs and The New Urban Agenda:

Participants shared experiences on the opportunities and challenges in hosting National Urban Forums (NUFs). Among the benefits shared were:

- The opportunity to bring a variety of stakeholders, including local governments, business, and private sector to the table for discussion, and
- The chance to allow for meaningful participatory decision making and the co-design of urban policies

However, panelists also noted the limitations of NUFs, citing:

- Challenges to react quickly to unforeseen crises, including intake of refugees from Ukraine, and the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- The financial costs associated with hosting large scale events.

As next steps, the panel discussed their aspirational visions for NUFs, including:



Victor Piñeda, President, World Enabled



The dais during the online intervention of Maciej Popowski, Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.

- The possibility of a global NUF alliance to share experiences across cities, and
- The creation of Local Urban Forums to support decision making at the local level.

Delivering Affordable Housing Across Countries:

Moderator Charles Hinga, State Department for Housing and Urban Development, Kenya, said housing is unaffordable and unavailable in most countries. Teresa Czerwińska, European Investment Bank, said the housing sector is becoming less accessible and suggested solidarity and inclusivity must be at the sector's forefront. Panelists then discussed, inter alia: strategies to sustain and increase investments in adequate and affordable housing; leveraging technology to integrate the supply chain for better and cheaper delivery of housing options; and prerequisites for effective public-private partnerships (PPPs), such as a sound legal environment. Célestine Courtès, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon, presented innovative policies to close the housing gap in the country. Collen Vixen Kelapile, ECOSOC President, warned unaffordable housing fuels growth in slums. Mohd Sharif said UN-Habitat worked towards promoting the right to adequate housing.

Tackling Urban Health Challenges in A Changing World:

The session began with a conversation about the multisectoral nature of health. Incompatible government policies between levels of government were provided as examples of barriers of good urban health. Speakers highlighted the need for a coordinated approach to city dweller health, given the diverse nature of health itself. Multiple panelists called for fundamental design principles for all current and future cities and disaggregated data on inequities to inform and monitor urban development. Some suggested greening of cities as a key aspect for better mental and physical health and an opportunity to foster deeper social and cultural connections. Moderator Graham Alabaster concluded we “need to take modifying our urban environments much more seriously for the sake of urban health.”

The City we Need Now!: Christine Auclair, World Urban Challenge, opened the special session on The City We Need



Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, and **Célestine Ketcha Courtès**, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon, attend the session on Delivering Affordable Housing Across Countries.

Now (TCWNN) by inviting participants to share action areas required to achieve the ten goals of TCWNN campaign. Panelists highlighted the following needs:

- Bringing women to the forefront of conversations;
- Recognizing the unique needs and challenges of youth;
- Building the capacity of municipalities to track data for decision making
- Supporting community-led initiatives;
- Ensuring vibrant economic activities and opportunities for all;
- Implementing comprehensive and integrated planning and development;
- Timely responses to urban resiliency challenges;
- Emphasis on nature-based solutions to address climate change; and
- Creating urban campuses to spark innovation.

These considerations will inform the future development of the campaign.

Climate Adaptation and Nature-Based Solutions for Resilient Cities: In the Special Session on Climate Adaptation and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for Resilient Cities, participants stressed the difficulty of mobilizing direct financing for “blue-green” projects, especially in “non-bankable cities.” Political rivalries between local and national governments also present obstacles for NBS, and citizen pressure can break deadlocks.

Panelists urged “integrated thinking,” with multi-level decision-making that crosses sectors and issues. Other suggestions included: participatory governance; bringing finance ministers and mayors on board by emphasizing long-term economic benefits and protecting lives; simultaneously mobilizing project, nature, human, and social capital; and drawing on traditional knowledge about sustainable living in harmony with nature.

The panel also identified examples of solutions that could be rapidly scaled: repurposing a city's heritage, renewing a focus on parks in urban planning; and building permeable surfaces and floating agriculture.



Participants during the discussion of the session on Climate Adaptation and Nature-Based Solutions for Resilient Cities