

TOMORROW TODAY TOGETHER

ADVANCE DRAFT -
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ON 28/04/22

UN  HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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TOMORROW TODAY TOGETHER

Delivering the New Urban Agenda

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COLLECTIVE URBAN IMPACT



1. CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

‘SIX OUT OF EVERY TEN PEOPLE IN THE WORLD ARE EXPECTED TO RESIDE IN URBAN AREAS BY 2030, RISING TO 83% BY 2050.’¹

Across the world, we are in a moment of great flux as we address historical challenges alongside continuing inequalities, current emergencies and future risks. No one escaped the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. No one nation is exempt from the threats of conflict or climate change. Indeed the countries and people facing such threats are only growing in number each day.

We know from history that with periods of great change and human threat, come moments of new thinking and new action to address the emerging and often deepening needs of a society. Despite all the challenges that have been experienced, many of which continue to require commitment and stamina from the broadest range of global actors, there are glimmers of hope. Out of the chaos and isolation have come new opportunities to reconnect and implement brave, collective, coordinated solutions to some of these pressing problems. Whilst these actions need to be informed by what has gone before, they are also being driven by the urgent, real and visible threats facing both people and the planet.

The key is to implement effective and positive change today. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) serves as a critical tool in this endeavor, helping to provide a coordinated approach to addressing the myriad of interconnected socio-economic, environmental and spatial challenges facing the world. With its focus on urban contexts where six out of every 10 people are expected to reside by 2030, it provides a road map for accelerating the Paris Agreement and the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development.

Unique in terms of its emphasis on spatial tools for generating sustainable development, the NUA provides an integrated strategy for addressing these challenges simultaneously. Only through a multi-pronged methodology can we have any hope of introducing the required level of change needed to progress peaceful, healthy, just and sustainable urban futures.

The New Urban Agenda reflects the links between sustainable urbanization and job creation, livelihood opportunities and improved quality of life, requiring incorporation of all these sectors into every urban development or renewal policy and strategy.²

One could assert fairly that no single challenge that affects people or planetary life is solely related to either the economy, environment, or social issues. But wherever these play out – whether in our homes, our streets, our parks or our cities – there remains a consistent theme – one that requires our urgent attention, understanding, investment and rejuvenation. And that is the relationship between people and their everyday environment. If nothing else, the past two years of the global pandemic have demonstrated how much this can impact our social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Recent shocks to public health, peace and security, together with an ever-increasing series of natural disasters, have shown that our relationship with our environment can change overnight, leading to a very different way of life and relationship with personal or public spaces. Our transport networks have stopped, our supply chains have been threatened, and some of our homes have been destroyed.

A spotlight has been shone on the impact that our homes, parks, streets, and cities have on the quality of our everyday lives, both positively and negatively, for the good and the bad.

Along with a growing realization about our vulnerability to infection, to disinformation, and to natural disasters, we have also become more aware of pre-existing socio-economic inequalities³ and how these often limit access not just to optimal living, working, and recreation, but also to life itself. Death rates—whether due to pandemic, conflict, or disaster—are determined heavily by our exposure to risk, conferred by where we live, and our resilience to shocks.

The latter is also greatly affected by our socioeconomic status: We either have access to an amenity or we don't. We either have homes that keep us safe and secure, or we don't. Workers have access to public transport, or they don't. Children and older generations have access to services and spaces of support, and women remain in safe environments, or they don't. Much as COVID-19 was described as 'a tale of two pandemics',⁴ so with conflict and disaster, which tend to disproportionately affect low-income populations, both financially and socially. Most recently, the rate of displaced people as a result of the atrocities in Ukraine has been unprecedented. Our urban crisis response must prioritize the most vulnerable as decimated human settlements are reconstructed.

Whilst many of these shocks have uncovered pressing societal, economic and environmental issues, our new behaviours have also led to a number of positive outputs: social cohesion and solidarity has increased within and between communities locally and globally, genuine public and co-produced space has been revalued, more public spending has been redirected to the most vulnerable, clean air rates improved significantly – at least for a while – and we now have unprecedented incentives to accelerate our transition to renewable energy. Change can happen.

Across societal divides and in both developing and developed nations, a wave of innovation has also occurred. New ways of working have emerged - practices based on co-production, collaboration, and multi-disciplinary expertise designed to address needs in a rapid, targeted and effective manner.

We have witnessed industries reach beyond their usual siloed working relationships to collaborate with other experts in the field to create a response to societal needs far greater and swifter than has ever been seen before.

Governments have converted centuries of traditional in-person activities to digital processes overnight. In some parts of the world, refugees, internally displaced persons, and persons experiencing homelessness have been greeted with an outpouring of resources and provision of accommodation and healthcare. Street space has been reallocated for sustainable and local movement patterns. Industries have collaborated to create scientific breakthroughs in record breaking time.

This behavioural change is something to study, celebrate and sustain as we seek to reach the SDGs by 2030, underpinned by the cultivation of urban spaces that allow us to thrive, not just survive.

Unfortunately, however, as each acute crisis seems to fade, we revert to our old ways: closing ranks, building places that are either segregated or overcrowded and relapsing into our fossil fuel addiction. But we have tasted and seen a different future – building healthy, safe, green cities is possible with a reset of priorities – a vision that results in multiple co-benefits.

As we reflect on these observations, evidence bases and experiences from across the globe in response to new and accelerating challenges, it's worth pausing to consider how we can use this knowledge to better inform and more effectively implement the NUA for strong, sustainable and human scaled urban futures. This, alongside the continuation of urban profiling to assess needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of urban areas, and the establishment of urban recovery frameworks, remains critical resourcing.

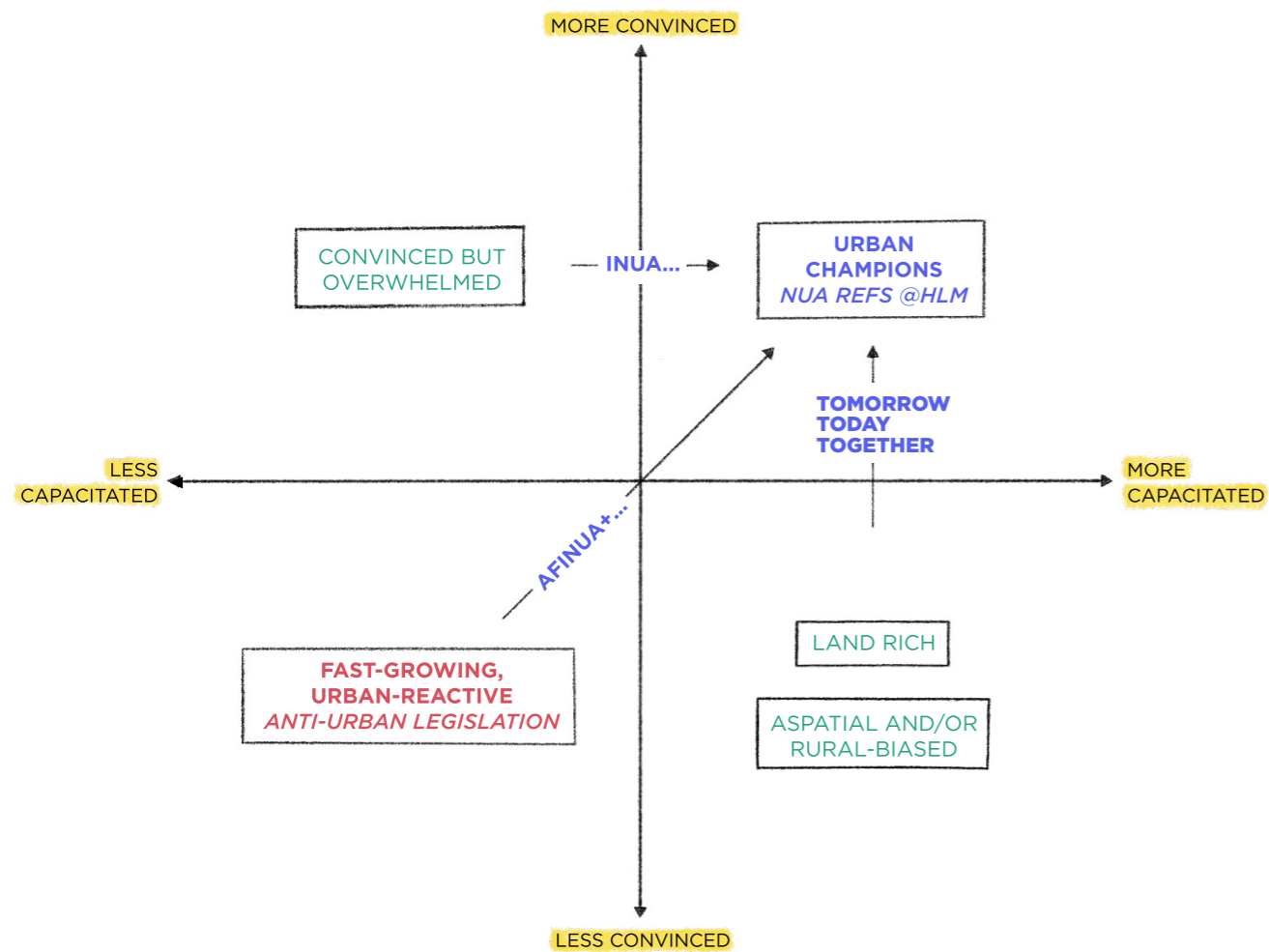
One thing has become clear: people and planetary challenges may be multifaceted, but they are also intrinsically linked to the spaces we inhabit. If war in its atrocity always capitalizes on a spatial plan – and it always does – then why shouldn't peacetime wield the same tool for good?

The way we manage and inhabit space holds many solutions to resolving everyday challenges. Our methodology to derive and deliver them must therefore change to reflect this, just as they have done during the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises that have gone before (and will come again).

Enabling more collaborative, cross-sectoral, multilateral and swift actions is the only way to address the urgent needs of tomorrow, today, together.

Delivering sustainable urban futures in this manner is the job, not only of UN-Habitat through the NUA, but the entire UN system. Indeed, the UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development compels us to do so. The Illustrated NUA (INUA) provides helpful context, while the Action Framework for the Implementation of the NUA (AFINUA) (see Chapter 4, New Urban Agenda Resources) distills the essential ingredients needed to enable all scales of governments to prioritize actions. When done well, urbanization becomes a vehicle to multiple higher-level outcomes such as innovative recovery, climate resilience and social integration. We cannot wait to solve these before tackling urbanization; in fact, just the opposite.

However, awareness and motivation to use the NUA remains low. The 2022 Quadrennial Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda evidenced this and serves as impetus for this paper.



The diagram above illustrates this context, showing the two dimensions of persuasion needed to convince governments to champion urbanization through the NUA. Several existing resources, such as the Illustrated New urban Agenda (INUA) and the Action Framework for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA) found in Chapter 4, can help shift governments 'up and over' to 'urban champions'.

The NUA resources will continue to evolve to support implementation, with future iterations having the potential to expand into self-diagnosis tools that situate governments, indicate counterproductive policies, and suggest improvements.

This paper does not cover every urban challenge, potential solution or realized opportunity, but highlights a number that are critical, ripe and ready for responses now. It does however make a call to every government, stakeholder and potential delivery partner to commit to change through the NUA - an urban agenda which is catalytic; and where limited resources are not an automatic disqualifier, but a circumstance by which new approaches can lead to far greater impact.

2. FINDING SOLUTIONS

THE NEW URBAN AGENDA AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

'AS COVID-19 CONTINUES TO WREAK HAVOC ON CITIES AND COMMUNITIES, THE WORLD IS LEARNING NEW WAYS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AT HAND AND MITIGATE THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF PANDEMICS IN THE FUTURE. NOW IS THE TIME TO RE-EXAMINE HOW REGIONS, CITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND BUILDINGS ARE PLANNED, DESIGNED, BUILT AND MAINTAINED.'⁵

Safe, responsive and nurturing environments are an important part of supporting the learning and development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Such environments also help to prevent challenging behaviors and serve as a core component of interventions for infants and young children with identified disabilities. This widely accepted and evidenced relationship between wellbeing and development surely does not cease when we become adults, but continues throughout every age of life, and therefore the spaces we inhabit should be treated with equal understanding, value and potential for impact across all social, economic and environmental aspects of our lives.

Investment in good urban and architectural design generates economic and social value: a well-designed hospital will help patients get better more quickly; a well-designed school will improve educational achievement.

In a poll commissioned by the UK's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (1999-2011), 85% of people agreed with the statement that 'better quality buildings and public spaces improve the quality of people's lives' and thought that the quality of the built environment made a difference to the way they felt.⁶ Further research shows that investment in good urban and architectural design generates economic and social value.

A well-designed hospital will help patients get better more quickly; a well-designed school will improve educational achievement; a well-designed neighbourhood will benefit from lower crime.⁷

These well-evidenced advantages of well-designed spaces in the context of health, education and neighbourhood architecture can be furthered to city scale - to the configuration and interactivity of buildings, infrastructure and services coming together in urban places.⁸ The urban context also benefits from good design. For instance, since 1965 Jan Gehl of the University of Copenhagen has conducted research into the contribution of public spaces to civic life in Copenhagen. His research has consistently shown that wherever public spaces of good quality are provided, there is a positive knock-on effect on public life. As a result, the level of public outdoor activity on a summer's day in Copenhagen equals that of Rome, despite the climatic differences.⁹

Direct connections can be drawn between public-realm and open-space improvements in cities and the achievement of lively, safe, sustainable and healthy cities for people. For instance, the amount of car traffic in Copenhagen has remained unchanged for the last 25 years while bicycle use has increased by 65%.¹⁰ Compared with other social investments, Gehl contends that the cost-benefit ratio of investing in the human dimension of cities easily outstrips that of healthcare and road infrastructure.

However, the growing complexity of urban environments requires even more attention in order to nurture people of all ages, in all geographies of developed and developing contexts, and particularly in strained environments where well-designed spaces can offer so much when there is so little else. Facing the COVID -19 global crisis with severe personal costs, we saw citizens leaning on their neighbourhoods for support to maintain their physical and mental health.

From page to proposition to project to place, the New Urban Agenda exists to attend to our everyday and future lives, through accelerating the implementation of the social, economic, environmental and spatial solutions for the challenges we face.

Its approach is combined in the following ways; 1. It is holistic in addressing key urban issues such as post-pandemic environments, housing and inequality, peace and security, and our climate crisis; 2. It is practical in its place-based approach to the resources and methods required to enable the 'Decade of Action' and the achievement of the SDG's; and 3. It is effective in working with a multiplicity of actors and across timescales to suit the challenges of varied urban circumstances.

'ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA REQUIRES STRONG ADVOCACY AND POLITICAL WILL TO MAINSTREAM URBANIZATION ACROSS THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. IT REQUIRES THE WIDE-SCALE MOBILIZATION OF MILLIONS OF ARCHITECTS, PLANNERS, SURVEYORS AND VALUERS, AND REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS AND ACCELERATION OF PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACTION IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA, AND TO ADDRESS CAPACITY GAPS. IT ALSO REQUIRES THE EXTENSION OF SUPPORT TO MEMBER STATES TO LOCALIZE SOLUTIONS.'¹¹

This systems-based approach can be applied to multiple themes, adapting to various aspects of the current crisis across a range of sectors to deliver effective but targeted impact. Structured as a framework to enable the consideration, development and implementation of solutions, it can also move beyond current crises, to address any potential future ones.

Currently the world faces four major challenges especially pertinent in urban contexts: post pandemic environments, housing and inequality, climate challenge, and peace and security.

**"CRISIS MOMENTS CREATE
OPPORTUNITY. PROBLEMS AND
CRISIS IGNITE
OUR GREATEST CREATIVITY
AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
AS IT FORCES US TO FOCUS ON
THINGS OUTSIDE THE NORM."**

SAM CAWTHORN



2A. POST- PANDEMIC ENVIRONMENTS

‘CRISIS MOMENTS CREATE OPPORTUNITY. PROBLEMS AND CRISES IGNITE OUR GREATEST CREATIVITY AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AS IT FORCES US TO FOCUS ON THINGS OUTSIDE THE NORM.’

Lockdowns created local living with global connectivity. New economies were unlocked, fueled by collaborative support structures, delivered by new community relationships and utilized through sustainable and green mobility networks - all whilst contributing and connecting to larger urban areas.

Cities and other urban environments were on the frontline of the COVID-19 global pandemic.¹² Whilst their connectivity, proximity, and (in some cases) overcrowding created public health challenges, their proximity of resources also created opportunities. In this context, the NUA’s role as a framework for a city’s sustainable present and future conditions across a multitude of scales, has become an even more vital tool to ensure a resilient and robust plan exists for such circumstances.

Within a very short space of time, many people’s private and public environments were disrupted thanks to social distancing measures that had repercussions across everything from employment to income, social services, access to food and water, families, friends and support structures. This prompted remarkable shifts in behaviours, attitudes and needs – ideas such as mass working from home, state intervention in private markets and a shift from the physical to the digital became the norm for those that could access it. This period has involved life-changing experiences, both for those affected and those in supporting roles.

With the introduction of lockdowns across the world, the diminished size of our new urban domain brought about some positive outcomes alongside those that were more challenging. Those who could access public space relied heavily on destinations at their doorsteps – from front door steps and boundary walls to neighbourhood streets and local parks. Places that may have once been relegated to passing through were now places for spending time in – connecting with neighbours, exercising, decompressing, and socializing at a safe distance.

With more time spent in our local neighbourhoods, a considerable amount of civic and grassroots support and outreach was mobilized. In some parts of the world, social cohesion grew within local communities, with three times as many people believing that COVID-19 had made their community more united (41%) than divided (13%). However, the final outcomes on what effects both ‘hard lockdowns’ and intermittent¹³ cycles of social distancing and easing restrictions have had on the connective tissue that holds societies together, remains to be seen or whether any temporary gains in social capital or ‘togetherness’ are outweighed by the losses, particularly in already marginalized communities.¹⁴

Residents and small businesses that were more physically, socially and economically connected proved to be better-positioned to weather the pandemic than their more isolated peers.¹⁵ Closely clustered firms and institutions, found in compact, mixed-use cities, played a critical early role in understanding and combating COVID-19. Their actions laid some essential groundwork for new services and working relationships that have resulted in record breaking innovation.

Often in these situations, local businesses and grassroots organizations evolved their standard procedures, proving to be agile in terms of their ability to adapt business plans and adjust working methods to respond to urgent needs and provide innovative outcomes. Mixed use urban environments with human centres proximities were sustained by their spatial construct, and initiatives like the 15-minute city concept gained traction with its proposal of an ideal geography where most human needs and desires are located within a travel distance of 15 minutes, with a focus on walking, cycling and public transport.¹⁶

Many cities designed and delivered temporary solutions that have translated into longer term action on mixed-use neighbourhoods, alternative mobility and urban regeneration, as seen in Paris, Milan, New York, Nairobi, and Barcelona as noted in the 2022 Quadrennial Report. The pandemic also reminded us of the role of public space in facilitating good public health, in its critical offer of greater air quality than indoor environments and the opportunities it provides for outdoor socialization.

Recognized as a multipurpose asset in cities, public space reclamation, greening and inclusive use, including gender sensitive design, have made considerable progress since 2018, heavily expedited by the urgent need for public outdoor space in urban areas during the pandemic.

Our virtual spaces also evolved during the pandemic, with the trends towards local living being mirrored by the expansive use of online working. This transition to digital life has created an uncertain future for city infrastructure and buildings, as demand for office space and inner-city housing continue to decline. But with this challenge comes the opportunity to consider more agile planning and design approaches that allow for changing city patterns that will in turn contribute to greater environmental resilience.¹⁷ Much like we saw during global lock downs, reallocation of street space for new mobility transportation were implemented within days, creating new cycle lanes and greater pedestrian priority to accelerate a ‘healthy streets’ agenda. Planning policy was readdressed to allow for greater flexibility in uses, such as single-purpose buildings becoming live-work spaces. Interim uses were seen not just as one offs but as scalable permanent changes as part of larger strategies.

The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have been most devastating in poor and overcrowded urban areas, especially for the one billion people living in informal settlements and slums worldwide, where overcrowding and densely populated environments makes it difficult to follow social distancing and self-isolation rules.¹⁸ This serves as a useful reminder that inhabitants per dwelling rather than per hectare is what matters in urban environments. Innovative, effective and sustainable solutions are required in these situations to ensure that all citizens have access to safe and accessible public spaces and urban environments that support wellbeing, particularly for women and youth.

Without an evolution of planning design and legislation in the face of crises such as COVID-19, there is further risk of urban segregation¹⁹ and accelerated migration as people at higher income levels look for new ways of living and working outside the city in response to the pandemic.

If associated with an increase in urban sprawl and income, racial and gender inequalities, migration away from cities could undermine vital efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), protect biodiversity and address the climate crisis.²⁰ In relation to biodiversity, peri-urban habitat loss often due to suburban expansion, is a challenge to remember in this content, emphasising the fact that we cannot wait to 'solve' the pandemic before addressing biodiversity and urbanization.

Design has a significant role to play in this. Good design provides a process to determine and then deliver outputs for sustainable and resilient cities. The NUA positions spatial and environmental contexts alongside social and economic factors for this very reason. The fact is that they are intrinsically linked.

Reflecting on what has improved and what remains a challenge, the furthering of mixed-use, walkable neighbourhoods will be essential in sustaining positive aspects such as strong social cohesion, local supply chains and support structures, qualitative public spaces and alternative mobility. Finding mechanisms to implement and drive socially and economically deprived urban contexts can be spurred on by the changing patterns experienced during COVID-19.

There is a wealth of learning to be done to capture the responsive and resilient behavioural changes that have enabled social and economic conditions to be addressed amidst the global pandemic, fueled by the spatial composition of communities, density of business resources and flow of innovative attitudes. Sustaining these behavioural changes would go some way towards delivering the transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda. Paired with the Agenda, these can set in motion a process of sequential components - from policy to plans to implementation - that enable all city stakeholders to be responsive, innovative and effective.

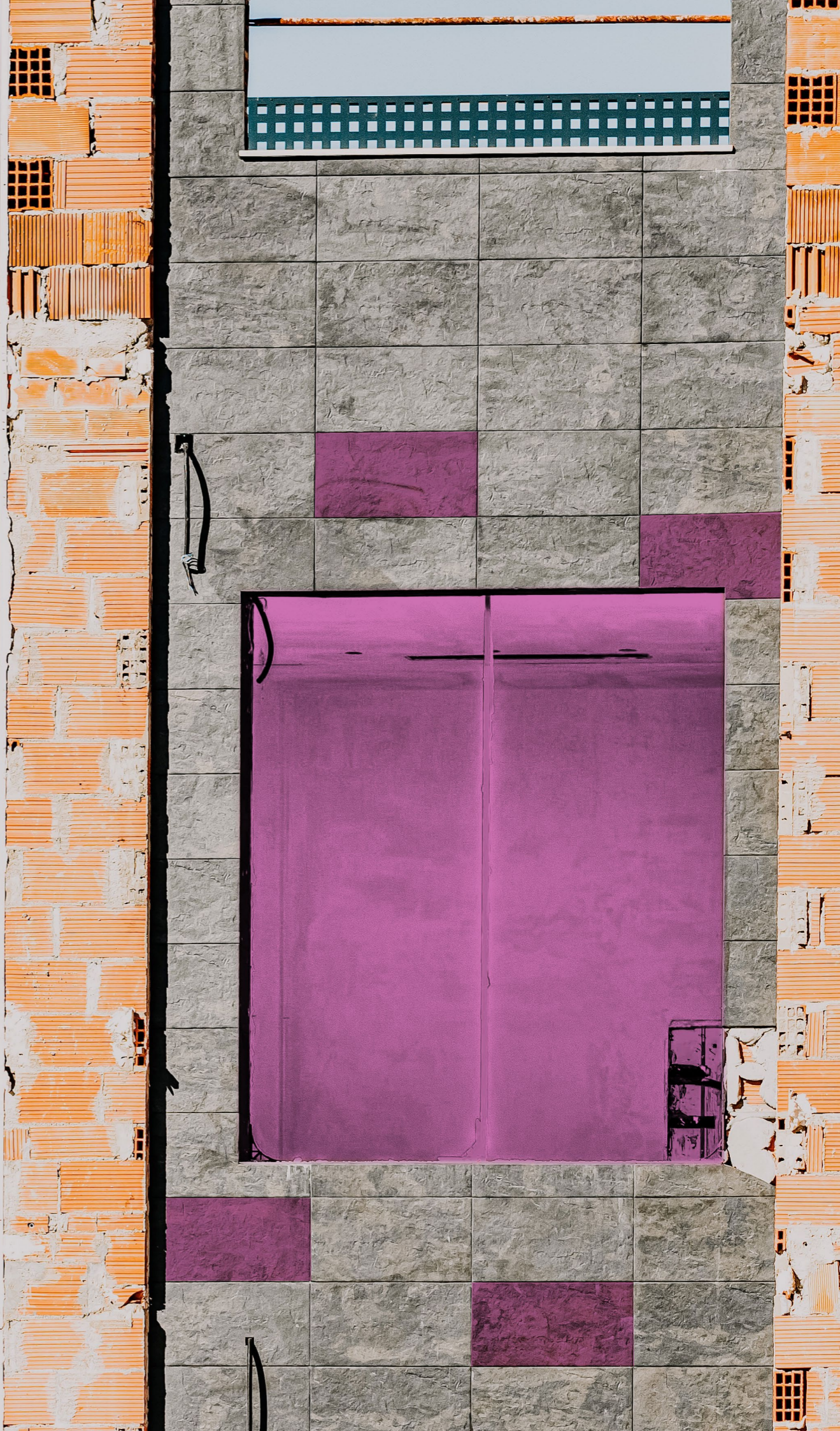
Urban policy has a significant role to play here in ensuring appropriate responses at local implementation level. The pandemic raised the profile of national urban policies to mobilize support for resilient, green and inclusive cities, often as part of national recovery packages.²¹ Critically, this requires new local finance, governance structures and multilateral opportunities. Fiscal space for local governments, including the capacity to raise revenue through taxes and national subsidies, is also required to enable national urban planning and design policies to be adapted to meet local needs. In the 2022 Quadrennial Report, it was universally recommended that governments and all local and non-state actors harness the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic to

There is an urgent need to rethink and transform cities to respond to the reality of COVID-19 and potential future pandemics, with agile and inclusive frameworks of policy, planning, design and delivery, matched with equally agile financial packages.

We know this is possible. The rapid shifts in society due to COVID-19 present powerful proof that society is capable of near-overnight transformation - something that will be needed to confront our most urgent threats.

As we know from previous disease outbreaks - such as the flu pandemic (1918) and localized epidemics of tuberculosis and cholera - such events often drive positive urban transformations. Consider the introduction of sewage systems, public parks and housing regulations to improve sanitation and reduce overcrowding that has followed since World War I. Today, local and regional governments are already demonstrating an impressive array of innovative solutions designed to address some of the new evolving weaknesses that have been exposed by the pandemic. This needs to continue and be sustained.

**MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
PARTNERSHIPS
FOR AFFORDABLE
AND SUSTAINABLE
HOUSING**



2B. HOUSING AND INEQUALITY

‘THE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY GAP IS EQUIVALENT TO \$650 BILLION PER YEAR, OR 1 PERCENT OF GLOBAL GDP. IN SOME OF THE LEAST AFFORDABLE CITIES, THE GAP EXCEEDS 10 PERCENT OF LOCAL GDP.’²²

The challenges associated with providing enough good quality, affordable housing, particularly in urban areas, are well known. Quantity, quality, cost, sustainability and suitability remain significant barriers across the globe. Recent public health, climate and conflict crises have only exacerbated these.

Our needs during a crisis tend to become focused on the critical components. The right to adequate housing, including access to land, public spaces and public services was amplified during the pandemic. Alongside food, water and power being the most basic and necessary needs that equally need to be secured across the world, these additional critical components demonstrate the interconnectedness of housing, not just as separate blocks in a city, but as core spaces in our daily life alongside transport, public space and places of work and play. Homes that fit into their natural and built surroundings, and connect people to places, and places to people, have the potential to increase quality of life and contribute to a socially and economically strong, green and prosperous future.²³

Financial packages and multilateral partnerships are critical to expediting housing design and planning that can be implemented in a way that fosters stronger communities, more sustainable housing and economically-viable delivery.

Delivering integrated urban housing solutions requires new methods of design, planning and construction. Emerging best practice suggests that new solutions can be found via multi-stakeholder partnerships able to deliver maximum impact quickly. An example of this can be seen in the partnership between Habitat for Humanity Lesotho (HFHL) the community, the government and a financial institution who all negotiated secure land tenure and the delivery of 143 homes for urban poor in Maseru.²⁴

With the climate crisis, there are progressive practices emerging that address the green building of homes, from more sustainable building materials and construction methods, to greener planning and design. Good quality housing that produces low maintenance and greater energy efficiency results in low lifetime costs which, in turn, can open up more affordable opportunities for the 1 billion people that currently live in urban slums and informal settlements worldwide.

Well designed homes also contribute to residents’ health. The Healthier Homes, Healthier Planet guide²⁵ demonstrates the impact that low-cost and practical strategies can have in creating healthy home environments for both people and planet. The WELL standard also exists to marry design with evidence based medical and scientific research. While wellness ratings for buildings are not new, the trend has definitely garnered further interest on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other ratings developed such as BREEAM, SKA, Passivhaus and LEED (NABERS in Australia) show a growing awareness of sustainability standards at individual development scale, considered through climate resilience and energy efficiency.

Despite this seeming like a microscale aspect of housing, the integral nature of housing, health and our environment is a vital relationship to embrace at every scale to ensure positive, qualitative and sustainable environments for us all.

Sustainable homes rely on not just sustainable materials, construction methods and living arrangements, but on the location, and proximity to needed services and transit connections. The development frameworks exist to aid delivery across these scales, and connect into the wider framework set up by the NUA to apply to sites to cities and beyond. Achieving this integration now, will reduce the risk of building neighbourhoods today that cause future bankruptcy tomorrow as a result of remedial retrofit needs.

Additionally, housing that connects with public space contributes directly to local development, social cohesion, climate mitigation, and economic recovery. As reported in 2022 Quadrennial Report, the design and management of public spaces have become participatory, and legal requirements of urban green areas per capita increased in many countries including Bahrain and Turkey.²⁶

Integrated urban policy is the key driver of the green revolution that our world requires to sustain communities and provide for those still needing a place to call home. The NUA’s framework of five interconnected elements (policy, regulation, planning and design, urban economy and municipal finance), paired with local implementation can support each stage of this process.

In Africa, the housing deficit is estimated at 51 million. In Latin America and the Caribbean, an estimated 70% of urban households live with precarious tenure. The number of migrants continues to grow globally, from below 180 million in 2000 to more than 270 million today, disproportionately affecting cities, often the intended destinations of migrants.

While the proportion of the urban population living in slums worldwide declined between 2000 and 2014 from 28 per cent to 23 percent, this positive trend has since reversed and by 2018, had grown to 23.5 per cent.²⁷ It is likely that the pandemic has further intensified this negative trend.

Beyond housing availability, there is also the challenge of affordability and the inequality that this brings, with a reminder that affordability is not just in the cost of the house, but the cost of living and commuting to places of work. While global poverty continued to decline for decades; in 2020, the trend was reversed.²⁸ The absolute number of people living in extreme poverty rose for the first time since 1997. The COVID-19 pandemic entrenched and extended existing disadvantages, deprivations and inequalities, both within cities and across the urban-rural divide, with significant gender dimensions – yet also provided opportunities to promote social policies and inclusion. Violations of land and housing rights persist globally and have continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁹

Whilst communities have come together, the pandemic has also exposed economic inequalities, geographical divides and the greater impact of the virus on certain groups including ethnic minorities and those with disabilities.³⁰ The pandemic deepened existing imbalances and created new vulnerabilities within and among cities, such as the importance of managing population density to prevent overcrowding.

The pandemic also underscored the importance of public goods and the public institutions that deliver them. Municipal ownership can ensure accountability to citizens over shareholders, with some cities now remunicipalizing certain services. It also raised awareness about the fiscal space local governments require to finance them.

As reported in the 2022 Quadrennial Report, the pandemic further interrupted the advances on gender equality in women's employment and safety through accrued care tasks, lost jobs and gender-based violence which creates a ripple effect on their housing needs.³¹ The needs of LGBTI people in housing and urban policies also remains a major challenge. All these forms of exclusion disproportionately affect women, youth, older persons, migrants and other marginalized groups in terms of their access to housing.

While many national governments in developing countries are providing financial tools to upgrade and build new homes, this support is not reaching everyone, and there is the risk of many being left behind. Recent resolutions of the General Assembly address these challenges and encourage the launch of multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote affordable and sustainable housing, and end homelessness as part of investments in jobs and social protection systems.

Collaborative leadership is creating solutions for multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote affordable and sustainable housing, but more is needed.

One promising solution that is being explored involves integrating housing and associated basic services with health, income and education as five elements of social protection, as outlined in Our Common Agenda.³² By advancing this package of social protections, Member States can address multiple forms of inequality and reduce poverty.³³ An integrated approach will be crucial: the NUA offers an opportunity to lever investment for affordable housing that will also simultaneously improve health outcomes, generate employment, enhance home-based learning and increase digital access.

The integration of essential services parallels the spatial integration of homes as fundamental components of our neighbourhoods, streets and cities.

Good urbanization that better connects our homes into their surroundings enables the wider connection to job creation, livelihood opportunities and improved quality of life, which should be included in every urban renewal policy and strategy.

Often, subsidized or low-income housing is segregated and located on relatively cheap land at the inaccessible urban periphery or on land vulnerable to flooding or landslides. Good urbanism as promoted by the NUA accounts for hidden spatial costs (e.g. commuting), long-term costs (e.g. peri-urban habitat destruction), and elevated risks (particularly for those who can least afford them). These critical connections are linked across the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

Accessible infrastructure is a critical ingredient for housing that serves people and place. Seeking appropriate, affordable and accessible services and infrastructure systems requires a holistic approach to understanding, designing and planning networks of infrastructure and services, linking infrastructure provision and urban planning.

In terms of construction and material of homes, new technology is creating modern methods of construction to speed up housing delivery, whilst architectural timber construction is providing sustainable building material adaptable to multiple climates.

Traditional methods of construction and material use are also regaining traction, fueled by innovative design and our greater awareness of climate issues. The Nahua community of Tepetzintan, Mexico, was lacking in housing appropriate to the location, the climate and the uses and customs of the region.

With the full participation of the community, a series of workshops were delivered to allow families to shape their future homes, regaining faith in local materials, alongside an understanding of the site and the construction systems being proposed. A modular construction system was designed and prefabricated on site, which allowed time efficiency on site and proper management of the materials. The construction was carried out by community labour.

In addition to adults, young people from the local high school took part in the process as well. They now train other groups of young people in the nearby communities. Five years after the first exercises, the community is building the project "Escuela Rural Productiva" (The Rural Productive School) with the same constructive technique and technical knowledge acquired in the training workshops.

Intrinsic to this approach was the participation of the local community, from the very start of the project. Co-production, co-design and community participation are approaches that are growing in their practice, with far greater benefit being felt by landowners, developers, designers and communities as they collectively commit to creating well designed sustainable housing.

Promising new practice is taking place in a variety of circumstances. However it is clear alongside the substantial needs for housing around the world today, the decisions we make now and the homes we build in the coming years will determine the quality of life of future generations. With this, comes an additional layer of need, to provide flexible housing for changing societal patterns.



**"THE BATTLE FOR
OUR PLANET WILL
BE LOST OR
WON IN CITIES"**

**ANTONIO GUTENHRES,
UN SECRETARY GENERAL**

20. CLIMATE

‘...CLIMATE IMPACTS ARE FELT DISPROPORTIONATELY IN URBAN COMMUNITIES; SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION CAN PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY.’³⁴

The benefits of climate action continue to multiply, while the costs of inaction continue to mount. The last two decades have seen a sharp increase in the number of recorded disaster events³⁵, which has required accelerated action towards disaster risk reduction and urban resilience.

Climate change, coupled with unplanned urbanization, has rendered many populations (disproportionately women, children and the elderly) and settlements vulnerable to natural and human-made disasters. Faced with the prospect of almost certain destruction, countries have been forced to adopt disaster reduction strategies. However, only 101 countries have such strategies that are aligned to some degree with the targets and priorities for action of the Sendai Framework, which aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries over the next 15 years.³⁶

Sustainable urban development can and should include nature-based solutions³⁷. By managing and limiting land conversion, combating urban sprawl, restoring urban ecosystems and greening food systems, some countries are making progress to reverse the loss of biodiversity. Multi-country, nature-based solutions can deliver energy efficient and environmentally sustainable development at scale.

In the absence of effective and sustainable urban planning, the consequences of an unchecked and poorly managed rise in urbanization will be dramatic. In many places around the world, these effects can already be felt via phenomena such as a lack of proper housing and the growth of slums, inappropriate locations that jeopardize people, nature, or both; inadequate and outdated infrastructure – be it roads, public transport, water, sanitation, or electricity – escalating poverty and unemployment, safety and crime problems, pollution and health issues, as well as poorly managed natural or man-made disasters and other catastrophes due to the effects of climate change.

Currently, over 10,000 cities across the world under the auspices of Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy have committed to reduce, by 2030, 24 billion tons of CO2 emissions. Most of these cities are developing renewable energy systems, adopting energy and resource efficiency, promoting green buildings, diverting from fossil fuels, and transitioning gradually to cleaner, inclusive public mobility systems.³⁸

The contribution of cities to the realization of the global targets on climate change is essential. While climate impacts are felt disproportionately in urban communities, sustainable urbanization can provide an opportunity to advance climate resilient development. Though, by some estimates, metropolitan areas account for 67-76% of global energy use and 71-76% of man-made CO2 emissions, suburban expansion at the urban periphery, which is generally low density and car dependent, may be

disproportionately responsible for this. Cities that are well-planned, compact and supported by high quality public transport, can still offer the most sustainable form of human settlement.

There are two critical components to reaching the transformative commitments aimed at mitigating further negative climate change - scale and behavioural change. Regarding scale, sustainable mobility in cities that serves both the micro- and macro-scale of its geography can make a significant contribution to creating more climate-friendly urban centers. Data by UN-Habitat shows that regions with a high share of public transport provision have significantly lower levels of air pollution.³⁹ Many cities face serious congestion and display low shares of public transport travel. Globally, only 47% of the urban population has access to low-capacity systems within 500m walking distance; and only 11% have access to high-capacity systems within 1000m walking distance.⁴⁰

The next 10-15 years are a unique ‘use it or lose it’ moment in economic history. (Globally) We expect to invest about US\$90 trillion in infrastructure to 2030, more than the total current stock. Ensuring that this infrastructure is sustainable will be a critical determinant of future growth and prosperity. The next 10-15 years are also essential in terms of climate: unless we make a decisive shift, by 2030 we will pass the point by which we can keep global average temperature rise to well below 2°C.⁴¹

Just as we saw in the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions and governments, right through to grassroots organizations, were forced to change their behaviors overnight in order to mitigate public health risks and serve those in need. A similar approach is required to mitigate the climate emergency.

As a consequence of global lockdown measures, mobility – 57% of global oil demand – declined at an unprecedented scale. Road transport in regions with lockdowns in place has dropped between 50% and 75%, with global average road transport activity almost falling to 50% of the 2019 level by the end of March 2020.⁴² Air travel in certain regions has almost come to a halt, with aviation activity in some European countries declining by more than 90%. Nonetheless, as lockdowns spread, global aviation activity declined by a staggering 60% during Q1 of 2020. As a result of declines in mobility, world oil demand plummeted by a record 10.8 mb/d year-on-year in March alone.⁴³ However, this situation rapidly reversed in 2022 as a result of the abolition of COVID-19 restrictions in many regions, and oil shortages resulting from the war between Russia and Ukraine. If nothing else, this tells us that short-termist reactions to crises alone won’t produce the change we need, rather only actively sustaining the temporary changes they prompt and turning response into long-term recovery.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has suggested a range of measures to reduce oil consumption, given the present energy crisis.⁴⁴ One of the largest reductions is seen by making public transport cheaper and promoting walking and cycling which results in a reduction of 330,000 barrels of oil per day. Reducing highway car speed limit by 10kmph reduces it by 290,000, and just by making Sundays car free in cities would reduce it by 95,000 barrels per day. One might argue that such measures would be permanently useful as ways to address the ongoing climate emergency.

By establishing social, economic and spatial behavioural changes across a range of scales, climate change can be addressed through initiatives based on criteria such as consuming less space and sharing infrastructure. The NUA and its supporting mechanisms help to foster the knowledge-sharing and capacity-building needed to help mobilize such behavioural changes in order to ensure both our people and the natural world continue to thrive, not just survive.

We have a remarkable window of opportunity to do so now, given the major structural changes the world faces, notably rapid urbanization, increasing globalization, shifts to service-based economies and increasing automation. The opportunities are great, but so too is the potential for stranded assets, stranded communities, and stranded workers. The transition to a low-carbon, resilient economy is just one part of this broader transformation, which—if managed well—has the potential to deliver more equitable and prosperous growth.

Ensuring an inclusive transition is essential: women, for example, will play a critical role in delivering the promise of this new growth era. Investment in partnership with organized grassroots and women's groups for effective localization of disaster risk reduction have strengthened community preparedness. Bangladesh has introduced climate adaptation frameworks geared toward planning and building resilience rather than preventing floods. It draws on networks of emergency shelters that double as community centers and on controlled breaching of dikes to manage tidal waters. Ensuring a people-centered approach, such that the gains are shared equitably and the transition is just, should be at the heart of climate mitigation projects.

Effective implementation will require new governance structures that all can participate in. As communicated in the 2022 Quadrennial Report, while the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged urban governance, it has highlighted the critical role local governments play as front-line responders in crisis response and recovery and accelerated the digitalization of urban governance.

New governance structures will need to couple with effective urban financing mechanisms - and that depends on more nuanced approaches to fiscal decentralization, not least the capacity of local governments to collect endogenous resources. OECD and UCLG concluded in 2019 that based upon available global data, there is a positive correlation between degree of decentralization of expenditures and wealth but there is no evidence that decentralization causes economic growth.⁴⁵

“THE GROWTH STORY OF THE 21ST CENTURY WILL UNLOCK UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES AND DELIVER A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE GLOBAL ECONOMY. THE BENEFITS OF CLIMATE ACTION CONTINUE TO MULTIPLY, WHILE THE COSTS OF INACTION CONTINUE TO MOUNT. IT IS TIME FOR A DECISIVE SHIFT TO A NEW CLIMATE ECONOMY.”⁴⁶

But we are significantly under-estimating the benefits of cleaner, more climate-smart growth. Bold climate action could deliver at least US\$26 trillion in economic benefits through to 2030, compared with business-as-usual. There are real benefits to be seen in terms of new jobs, economic savings, competitiveness and market opportunities, together with improved well-being for people worldwide.⁴⁷

Social sustainability requires economic sustainability, which in turn, requires spatial sustainability that enables environmental sustainability. Models of development based on consuming less space and sharing infrastructure are a critical mind shift to take place to enable stability across the piece. The NUA creates a 'start to finish' framework that brings coherency across these core dimensions in order to achieve the necessary environmental targets.

Within the 2022 Quadrennial Report, Member States have been encouraged to utilize the New Urban Agenda in a more intentional manner to strengthen efforts to protect the earth's ecosystem. By advancing the transformative commitments and applying its key drivers, countries can accelerate climate action, protect biodiversity and reduce pollution. The future of our planet depends on the decisions that are made today.

**URBAN CONTEXTS
HOLD THE POTENTIAL
TO RAPIDLY AND
POSITIVELY REACT,
SUPPORT AND NURTURE
PEOPLE IN NEED OF
PEACE AND SECURITY.**



2D. PEACE AND SECURITY

‘...CONFLICT IMPACTS THE SHORT AND LONG TERM, CROSSING HUMANITY’S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.’

We are now living through the largest wave of human displacement worldwide. Through effective planning, multi-sectorial collaborative working alongside local involvement and implementation, urban contexts are able to rapidly and positively react, support and nurture people in need of peace and security.

While the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on wider cross-border migration and displacement globally is not yet clear, UNHCR data shows that arrivals of new refugees and asylum-seekers decreased sharply in most regions during this period. This translates to about 1.5 million fewer people than would have been expected in non-COVID circumstances, reflecting how many of those seeking international protection in 2020 became stranded.

Despite COVID-related movement restrictions and pleas from the international community for a ceasefire that would facilitate an effective COVID-19 response, population displacement continued to occur – and to grow.

By the end of 2020, the number of people forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order had grown to 82.4 million⁴⁸ – the highest number on record according to available data. 33 million are children. This was more than double the level of a decade ago (41 million in 2010), and a four per cent increase from the 2019 total of 79.5 million. As a result, above one per cent of the world’s population – or 1 in 95 people – is now forcibly displaced. This compares with 1 in 159 in 2010.⁴⁹

But life still happens in-between walls, tents, shelters and borders. UNHCR has a goal for ‘refugees to be able to pursue sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the economic life of the host country, and live among the host population without discrimination or exploitation’. In order for this to be fulfilled, a significant amount of planning, design and sustainable resourcing needs to be implemented in order to create more fair and just urban environments, no matter how temporary, that support people in these critical circumstances.

The majority of refugees and internally-displaced people move to cities, seeking economic and social opportunities, yet they often live in marginalized areas exposed to hazards, without access to adequate housing, infrastructure, employment or basic services.

Urban areas can offer multiple opportunities for those displaced, utilizing the density of resources to create agile support services, both in the short - and long-term. Investing in inclusive urban planning in countries post-conflict and disaster situations is often essential to strengthening social cohesion through durable solutions.

Sustainable planning and design can contribute to positive social, spatial and environmental relations and experiences, thus creating a greater opportunity for refugees and displaced people to positively connect with their immediate temporary surroundings. This, in turn, supports a refugee in accessing wider social services and with host communities via interfaces such as camps and detention centers.

However, constraints on basic resources and social networks within the host communities and border areas, which are often already stretched thin, can serve to aggravate relations between these refugees and their neighboring communities unless investment in rapid planning, design and funding occurs. Until this happens, the vast array of governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) currently working to provide for refugees, asylum seekers and internally-displaced persons, will continue to draw attention to problems such as poor security, sexual and gender-based violence, inadequate housing and inadequate public health conditions that currently plague the system. These often have crippling ripple effects on individuals, both in the immediate and surrounding communities.

The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme⁵¹ (KISED) developed a new model of integrated refugee-host community settlement on 1,500 hectares in northwestern Kenya. Partly spurred on by Kenya Vision 2030, KISED has brought together the Government of Kenya, County Government of Turkana, UNHCR, UN-Habitat and other partners to address an influx of regionally displaced people.

In 2016, UN-Habitat formulated the Advisory Development Plan, which now provides the foundational guidelines for all the stakeholders working in the Kalobeyei settlement. Together with the neighboring Kakuma Town and Refugee Camp, it has a combined population of more than 200,000 people.

This shared plan ensures integration across planning and design proposals alongside sound economic considerations and regulatory frameworks. It also guides pilot shelter initiatives, provision of basic services, development of community and social facilities, and capacity development amongst local communities. As an outcome to this, the camp has been able to secure more sustainable economic growth for both refugees and host communities. In 2018-2019, neighbourhood-level achievements included the installation of community management structures, adoption of participatory processes in project design, and innovation and technology transfer for increased community resilience.

The program has responded to evolving conditions and in turn has evolved itself, creating a full circle learning opportunity. UN-Habitat has begun to synthesize data, distill lessons, and feed lessons learnt back into the revision of its norms and guidelines on bridging humanitarian and development activities. Going forward, there are plans to replicate these guidelines in other contexts participating the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus as well as return to Kakuma-Kalobeyei where lessons learnt are, at the time of writing, being incorporated into a comprehensive visioning and regeneration strategy for the area.

New processes that bring together those that have been displaced with those that can provide resources would be a welcomed change and sound investment.

The construction of secure urban environments requires the buy-in of the communities that will be living there. Participatory planning and co-creation of basic service programs by displaced and indigenous populations has proven to increase social cohesion and promote peace and security while also improving living conditions.

This results in a flip of mind-set whereby camps are reframed as opportunities to secure basic human rights and sustainable living conditions, a challenge that exists on one level or another in all cities and shared spaces worldwide. The approach would shift away from the temporary warehousing of refugees to a planning prototype that intentionally and meaningfully connects displaced families to each other and their social networks; and the camps, to the local communities through shared governance. Whilst remaining a temporary measure, this approach does seek to create more sustainable, social, economic and environmental conditions and relationships.

A critical component of fruitful relationships is shared space - a challenging but essential ingredient to sustaining a sense of community and connection. These spaces also have the additional potential of being collaboratively developed into productive spaces capable of fostering livelihoods, and educating the significant number or young people caught up in the chaos of conflict and migration.

In the 2022 Quadrennial Report, Member States are urged to accelerate the pace of implementation of the New Urban Agenda in countries in post-conflict and disaster situations. Sustainable means married with collaborative approaches will help to ensure viable spaces that support the 82.4 million people forcibly displaced in ways that create the greatest chance for them to survive and progress beyond the walls of their current confinements, and build a better future for our planet in a positive and sustainable way.

In his invitation to the NUA High Level Meeting, April 2022, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, emphasized that the New Urban Agenda requires wide scale mobilization of architects, planners, surveyors and valuers, as well as real estate professionals; and the acceleration of partnerships for action, in order to address capacity gaps. This is a significant challenge in the short and long term, but there are existing education programmes that have already started to connect with both industry and the third sector which serve as strong precedents and create hope for new impact.

Centered on a critical understanding of the terms 'global' and 'freedom', one such example is the Global Free Unit, which puts forward a new agenda for architectural education in the 21st century. As active citizens and emerging practitioners, Global Free Unit students do not follow a classic academic course but are embedded in live project classrooms based in a variety of contexts, ranging from refugee camps to abandoned inner-city sites, prisons, demilitarized zones, migration centers and depopulating rural communities.

At the heart of the Global Free Unit is the core intent to radically reframe notions of value. Current educational structures prioritize competition, individualism and self-interest, which are then mirrored in practice. They are brokering a realignment of values by placing more emphasis on a student's own principles and life experience, in order to address current human needs in some of the most challenging and transitory contexts.

It's fair to say that while bricks and mortar are not effective on their own, when brought together with other measures, they can significantly contribute to providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment for those needing to find new homes and communities, both in the short and long term.

Placed alongside other experiences and expertise in the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, a Global Action Plan on inclusive urban planning in countries in post-conflict and disaster situations appears to offer a multi-pronged method of strengthening social cohesion through durable solutions.

The UN-Habitat's role in urban crisis response, along with an increasing need for rapid and radical change to meet the challenges of the 21st century, raises fundamental questions about planning and preparedness, whilst also outlining the stark reality of what can happen if we fail to get it right.

**A CRITICAL
MOMENT TO
CONNECT ACROSS
DIFFERENCE,
RETHINK
APPROACHES,
REDESIGN METHODS
AND IMPLEMENT
CHANGE.**



2E. ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

Projections regarding urbanization have been filtering through conversations and commitments for decades. Each year presents updated targets required to sustain and progress the welfare of both people and planetary life. A general increase in these projections, interspersed with moments of intense global crisis, is creating both greater urgency and pressure to act with maximum impact in order to address these mounting problems.

In 2020, the world's most used search engine reported an increase in searches related to a desire to serve the greater good. Top trends included how to help the Australia fires, get involved in Black Lives Matter, volunteer during COVID-19 and offer aid to Beirut. Key workers became our lifeline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unsurprisingly, global searches on how to thank these dedicated people also hit an all-time high – with teachers, bus drivers, nurses and doctors topping our gratitude lists. Worldwide searches on support for small business also doubled compared to the previous year; and with rising seas, deforestation, greenhouse gases and wildfires becoming ever more prevalent, 2020 also saw us searching for how to stop climate change more than ever.

In 2021, however, there was a significant shift. *“In a year in which the world continued to face a devastating pandemic among other global challenges, a theme emerged from the search data: the global pursuit of healing and finding a way forward. Whether searches were personal (like “how to recover from burnout” or “how to maintain mental health”) or related to issues like climate change (“impact of climate change”, “how to conserve”), 2021 was a year of seeking out reassessment, reflection, and growth.”*⁵²

Predictably, COVID was a top search for 2021, along with related searches such as “COVID vaccine near me” which outpaced “COVID testing” compared with the previous year thanks to the extraordinary research effort and collaborative working across the scientific community. Going forward, we can predict that conflict crisis; refugees, peace and security will feature heavily in 2022.

What does this tell us?

We are at a pivotal moment where change is urgently needed, and those willing to step up to enable the change are reaching critical mass. How we choose to implement this change will determine its effectiveness. How we connect across difference, rethink approaches, reframe agendas and implement for maximum impact will determine the questions that our children and future generations will ask of us.

Current actions are not enough. But we do have the tools needed to improve, increase and adjust in order to enhance these actions. When balanced against pressures on available resources and budgetary constraints, more effective implementation can take place.

Most importantly, we are witnessing a behavioural change in response to the most recent climate, conflict and pandemic crises. These fresh approaches are seeking new partnerships to forge braver and bolder routes for the creation of an environment that we can all nurture, sustain, and belong to.

Ensuring a sustainable and resilient recovery from the current global crises requires our efforts to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the NUA and other internationally agreed frameworks. Our approach to urbanization in particular, will determine our abilities to reduce poverty, address inequality, achieve balanced prosperity, keep the 1.5-degree target alive, and promote social cohesion and peace building.

As the NUA emphasizes, realizing the interlinkages across social, economic, environmental and spatial contexts is the key to unlocking the full potential of what we can achieve.

By optimizing our resources, and leveraging development outcomes at every level of government, within the UN system, and across all sectors and stakeholders, it will become possible to reduce spatial inequality, enhance shared prosperity, boost resilience of communities, strengthen climate action and effectively achieve sustainable urbanization.⁵³

Within the National Reports, Voluntary Local Reports and collaborative workshops for the 2022 Quadrennial Report, four critical components emerged that demonstrated accelerated implementation, with the potential for further growth and impact. These are critical resources to invest in now, collectively and collaboratively, with clear dissemination of learning to incentivize others.

1. Capacity building - Investing in our skills base to ensure our people are equipped to initiate and deliver effectively will help to ensure that we make the most of every opportunity for change, action and impact. Leadership and participation from all levels of governments in progressing the skills drive, initiating training, and connecting beyond to the private, civic and third sector is an area ripe for investment of resources with a return that benefits us all.

Part of the challenge is human capital. While the Netherlands has 1 planner for every 1,000 people and the United Kingdom 1 planner for every 3,000 people,⁵⁴ in Indonesia there is only 1 planner for every 80,000 people.⁵⁵

During the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity building and knowledge sharing evolved with increased digitalization. Diverse constituency networks and the UN system organized online events and knowledge platforms to accelerate the sharing of experiences. While resilient in the face of adversity, the overall capacity of national and local governments to implement the New Urban Agenda remains limited.

While a comprehensive evaluation on the capacities of national and subnational governments remains unclear, it is evident that many countries still lack the awareness on how the New Urban Agenda can help to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and other global agendas. There is also a need to scale capacities in order to empower the drivers of the New Urban Agenda, especially in countries experiencing rapid urbanization.

Mobilizing people from a variety of industries that can translate, connect and deliver across urban policy to regulations to planning and design to implementation, from the strategic to local scale, is a critical skills base to invest in.

The interconnectedness of urban challenges requires a corresponding interconnectedness of the skills and methods needed to address these challenges. Leaders in politics, business and academia need knowledge that spans beyond the siloed nature of our current higher education system. Learning these new multi-disciplinary approaches demands both short- and long-term

New emerging education programs that enable learners to work beyond the usual subject specializations are already demonstrating the impact that can be made when focused on world problems first; and disciplinary theory and practice, second.

2. Data – Capacity building also relies on knowledge creation and dissemination across the UN to Member States and to all local implementers. This requires a solid and accessible data source. The new Global Urban Monitoring Framework will be a significant contribution to this, with further investment required to create the breadth and depth of data and practical application required to inform and sustain the new wave of skills for effective implementation.

The role of data remains paramount to furthering the NUA implementation. Creating solid evidence bases for our activities, in order to determine impact across the NUA categories can then feed the cyclical process of application, evaluation, improvement and reapplication.

Over the past three decades, we have seen a significant leap in technological advances that can provide us with live, documented and information-led access to our streets and cities; from spatial data and social behavioural evidence to surveillance services and environmental change monitoring.

Generally, and across the globe, planning systems and the surrounding processes of urban growth and placemaking remain stagnant and disconnected from digital technology opportunities. Little evolution has occurred in these realms, whilst the gap widens between what is possible, desirable, accessible or necessary, and what is delivered. This is despite digital access to street views across the world since 2007, with most major cities having access to 3D digital models for the past five years.

To support the interdisciplinary approaches required for sustainable urbanism, all whilst shaping the cities of tomorrow, we need accessible data that can further best practice. Creating access for all, from councilor to citizen, young person to industry worker, it will begin to address the current lack of diversity and transparency in those that shape, influence and make decisions about urban environments in many parts of the global south and north.

Consolidating urban data and making it accessible also creates a way to encourage the cultural paradigm shift required to drive social purpose, social value and trust. It also offers a mechanism for modeling the necessary urban adaptations needed to respond to future health pandemics and other crises, which will hopefully have lasting effects on how we choose to handle space and manage population movement.

Time and as a consequence, funding are the two key resources that can be saved as a result of this holistic approach. Decisions on how and what to build, and how to design the best possible city are complex and challenging - and the consequences of getting it wrong are long lasting and expensive.

3. Multilevel governance - Constructing effective decision-making processes, informed by evidence, is the third accelerator requiring investment. Governance underpins the UN Sustainable Development Goals through the enabling of goal 17 on strengthening partnerships.

Enabling decision-making that is inclusive and empowering for those at all levels, but especially the local level, is critical in the drive for a new social contract in urban areas.

As outlined in the 2022 Quadrennial Report, Member States are urged to consider institutional mechanisms to engage local and regional governments in intergovernmental and national planning processes. This builds upon the NUA and its call for strengthening coordination among the various levels of government – a commitment made relevant by the COVID-19 pandemic where cities and their governance processes were on the front line of delivery and recovery mechanisms. It also speaks to the aspirations of Member States in Our Common Agenda to promote inclusive, networked multilateralism.

In applying the holistic framework of the NUA, governance in turn needs to provide holistic decision-making processes for the implementation of strong urban policy, legislation, design and planning. The focus of governance on who is involved in making decisions and what kinds of knowledge gets to count fundamentally frames what is and is not possible in cities, and by extension enables us to understand how they might be reconfigured to make more sustainable actions possible.⁵⁶

The processes of design and planning can in themselves offer mechanisms of good decision making to shape the urban future, enabling collaboration across different governance bodies and their many stakeholders. Sustainable cities are good cities. Good cities require good design. Good design requires good decision-making.

The NUA's unique emphasis on spatial tools for generating sustainable development requires mobilization through informed governance structures. Design is key in utilizing these spatial tools, providing a process wherein multiple differences are brought into relation with one another, thus requiring discussion, negotiation, and accommodation, and a decision-making process that addresses a diversity of urban claims. At the same time, design must respond to social, economic, environmental and political vectors in spatial terms, guided by the promise of holistic and strategic solutions that may build a positive pattern of coexistence.

Design led urban frameworks are integral to the NUA, as they are underpinned by shared, accepted values regarding spatial design and its capacity for positive impact for its users. This, in turn, enables users to collectivize the range of different components and constituencies involved – despite their differences – and mediate a route towards beneficial outcomes.

An area of promising growth within governance, is that of participatory governance. Co-production, co-creation, collaborative working are all components of this approach that bring end users – communities, professionals, young people, marginalized and others – to participate in creating and implementing governance processes. This sort of civic participation can be stimulated and can even produce “spill over effects”— changes in behavior that produce greater civic and political engagement beyond the participatory arena itself.⁵⁷ Such outputs only serve to benefit those governing and those being impacted by the outcomes, creating inclusive and relationship building processes with real conditions at the heart of decision making.

4. Financial mechanisms – Resourcing these activities, both in the short and long term, to allow for the changing methods of convening, creating and implementing is crucial. Without such – change is almost impossible to achieve.

Funding mechanisms also need to have the capacity to encourage innovation, thereby creating new models to fuel the variety of projects and reporting processes that are required in diverse circumstances.

During the COVID-19 response, city and regional governments have been facing a ‘scissor effect’ of mounting expenditures related to the health, economic and social impacts of the virus, and a simultaneous decrease in revenues due to economic disruption.⁵⁸ With these emerging challenges, come opportunities to rethink investment priorities, models, and project design to reduce health-related shocks and align diverse sources of finance. The pandemic underscored the importance of public goods and the institutions that deliver them, and it raised awareness about the fiscal space that local governments require in order to finance them.

Predictable financing mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda remains a largely unfulfilled recommendation of the 2018 Quadrennial Report. Local revenue capacity continues to be strained, especially in small and intermediate cities. More progress is needed to promote investments into local and national infrastructure to ensure data collection, verification, analysis and dissemination.

Member States will need to involve all relevant levels and sectors of government in decisions on investment. Successful decentralization of responsibilities to subnational levels, even if supported by fiscal devolution and authority of sub-sovereign borrowing, have been highly dependent on existing governance systems and traditions.

By imminently investing in these core accelerators we will collectively galvanize the international community’s collective efforts towards sustainable urbanization in support of the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Realizing the interlinkages of these commitments is the key to unlocking their full potential, optimizing resources, and leveraging resource development outcomes at every level of government, both within the UN system, and across all sectors and stakeholders. It will then be possible to reduce spatial inequality, enhance shared prosperity, boost resilience of communities, strengthen climate action and effectively achieve sustainable urbanization

3. IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

CASE STUDIES THAT DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL ACCELERATORS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Demonstrating where actions are being implemented is a critical component of inspiring, informing and catalyzing further activity across the core themes and accelerators that will implement the New Urban Agenda.

The case studies included here are a selection that illustrate the four main accelerators that were determined as the most critical within the 2022 Quadrennial Report – capacity-building, data, multilevel governance and financial mechanisms.

Collectively, these accelerators are essential components for the New Urban Agenda in its role to link sustainable urbanization and job creation, livelihood opportunities and improved quality of life. Their outcomes provide new models of effective implementation at different scales and collaborations of actors - local or global, private or public sector, grassroots or governments.

Further case studies will be gathered to continue to fuel the decade of action required, linking with further growth of the NUA resources for implementation and impact, such as the new Global Urban Monitoring Framework.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN BATTAMBANG



Sustaining Resources Through Enhanced Waste Management, Battambang, Cambodia.

PROJECT SUMMARY

A regional and local partnership programme to deliver training and implementation of solid waste management, as part of the wider 'Localizing the 2030 Agenda in Asian & Pacific Cities Project' where local implementing agencies have been working closely with the Battambang Municipality and Department of Labor to raise awareness about the SDGs and the management of urban resources.

Project lead actor:

Battambang Municipality
(regional government)

Project stakeholders:

Battambang Municipality, Department
of Labor, Habitat Cambodia UNESCAP,
UNHabitat

Location:

Battambang, Cambodia

Year of implementation:

2018 - 2021

Core theme/s:

Sustainable Waste Management,
Capacity Building

SDGs:

3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 16, 17

NUA principles:

Ensure sustainable and inclusive
urban economies
Ensure environmental sustainability

AFINUA:

- National urban policies
- Urban legislation, rules and regulations
- Urban economy and municipal finance
- Local implementation

Links to other global agendas:

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk
Reduction
Paris Climate Agreement

INTENT: WHAT WAS THE TARGET TO CHANGE?

Through Sustainable Urban Resource Management (SURM), the project aims to strengthen the capacities of local governments and other key urban stakeholders to adopt policies and take action that minimizes the negative; and maximizes the positive environmental, social and economic impacts of urban consumption and production systems.

The primary objectives of the project were:

- (a) To develop a collaborative and adaptive urban governance through multi-stakeholder coalitions
- (b) To integrate analysis and planning through system-based approaches
- (c) To introduce and practice evidence-based decision-making using data, information, analysis and dissemination.

IMPLEMENTATION: HOW WAS THE PROJECT DELIVERED?

Battambang began working on this by involving stakeholders to identify and frame issues with the SDGs at the center of the process. Discussions on how to engage stakeholders, raise awareness and build knowledge on SURM linked to the 2030 Agenda were held.

As the local implementing partner, Habitat Cambodia led the establishment of a core team involving a few key stakeholders and a broader multi-stakeholder network comprised of representatives from Battambang Municipality, the University of Battambang, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Working with researchers from the University of Battambang, a baseline study to assess the status of solid waste management (SWM) in Battambang was prepared and shared at a Strategic Planning Workshop. The multi-stakeholder network and community members reviewed findings and discussed ways to improve waste collection and management as well as strengthen existing regulations and policies.

Throughout the Project, Battambang has been gathering information, analyzing data and disseminating knowledge with a focus on sustainably managing its solid waste. Details on waste generation, the composition of recyclable material, service coverage and quality, disposal and treatment practices, and the policy landscape have contributed to developing comprehensive, integrated project activities and policies.

IMPACT: WHAT CHANGE DID IT ACHIEVE?

The main outcomes of the project were strengthened awareness and institutional capacities of Battambang to accelerate multi-stakeholder action on the SDGs at the local level through the more integrated implementation of relevant urban development and land use plans in the city.

From 2020 through 2021, Battambang has been working to improve livelihood opportunities, especially for women, through the creation of waste banks and entrepreneurship training in SWM targeting women.

Also, Battambang's SWM system was enhanced through institutional capacity building and effective implementation of environmental and SWM policies, including the development of a Municipal Solid Waste Management Master Plan to coordinate and systematically reform waste management practices in Battambang.

Besides this, Battambang improved community awareness of efficient SWM approaches through outreach programs on recycling, enhancing the quality of waste collection services and incorporating technological innovation into Battambang's SWM (including mobile applications and the use of social media).

While cooperation among stakeholders was previously rarely observed, the intensive participatory capacity-building and experience of co-developing the waste management strategy brought key participants together for sustained collaboration based on a shared vision and the common goals of improving waste management.

WHAT WERE THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ACHIEVING IMPACT?

Since its inception, the program has focused on developing SURM and holistic capacity-building via a series of collaborative and co-design workshops in Battambang.

By empowering local stakeholders to design their projects, the core team introduced participants to a systems-thinking approach. The process included: cluster analysis, root cause analysis, prioritization and SWOT analysis. These analyses used participatory approaches to promote critical and analytical thinking skills – a method that proved to be very successful.

ANY SPECIFIC APPROACHES OR TOOLS THAT ALLOWED FOR EXPEDITED DELIVERY?

Battambang invited stakeholders to participate in strategy development and project design from an early stage. This helped to foster a sense of ownership amongst local stakeholders, who felt more involved, thus strengthening their commitment to the implementation of the planned activities as projects evolved.

In Battambang's case, this resulted in voluntary financial and human resource commitments from both the service implementers and generators, which removed reliance on external support, and aiding further implementation.

On-site visits and participatory training programs also helped to strengthen personal relationships amongst the key stakeholders. In Battambang's case, such visits and training proved to be indispensable first steps to initiating constructive dialogue and building trust, which in turn, that led to collective goal setting based on a shared vision for improving the state of the city's waste management.

HOW WERE ANY CHALLENGES OVERCOME?

Low awareness and cooperation of residents were addressed through rigorous community communication and outreach programs. To compensate for the insufficient experience of the local stakeholders, regular monitoring and evaluation was carried out via follow-up actions by a task force, comprising representatives from both the municipality and the implementing agencies.

Funding shortages were also overcome through a series of negotiations with public funding authorities, leading to the development of a public-private partnership with the residents of the city, who responded with in-kind contributions and offers to volunteer their time and skills, thus ensuring there were enough human resources to fully implement the goals of the partnership.

DATA DATA DATA DATA



Urban Data Centers, The Netherlands

PROJECT SUMMARY

The creation of an urban data platform by data experts to aid cities in their use and application of data for a variety of outputs such as evidence-based policy making and Sustainable Development Goal targets.

Project title:

Urban Data Centers

Project lead actor:

Statistics Netherlands (CBS)

Project stakeholders:

CBS Statistics Netherlands, UN, WCCD, World

Council on City-Data Location:

The Netherlands

Year of implementation:

2018

Core theme/s:

Urban data, urban governance, planning

SDGs:

11, 17, all

NUA principles:

- Leaving no one behind , by ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions
- Ensure sustainable and inclusive urban economies
- Ensure environmental sustainability

AFINUA:

All components:

- National urban policies
- Urban legislation, rules and regulations
- Urban planning and design
- Urban economy and municipal finance
- Local implementation

Links to other global agendas:

All that require data

INTENT: WHAT WAS THE TARGET TO CHANGE?

Cities worldwide face serious data-related challenges and are formulating strong ambitions with regards to topics like smart cities, open data, big data and data driven, evidence-based policymaking designed to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals. There is a growing realization among public authorities in the Netherlands that their work should be data-driven, but the data was not readily available, nor combined across national-local divisions or across data sources. This project addressed this challenge by convening data experts with city authorities to create multi-disciplinary, city-scaled data platforms.

IMPLEMENTATION: HOW WAS THE PROJECT DELIVERED?

This collaboration was made possible through CBS Urban Data Centers. Within an Urban Data Center, a municipality combines its strengths with core expertise available at CBS on, for example, data infrastructure, data processing and privacy protection. The expertise is applied to local policy issues by committing (new) data sources towards finding policy solutions and addressing local implications of societal developments. Local authorities, businesses and institutions then improve their understanding of actual developments within the municipality, informed by these new evidence bases.

IMPACT: WHAT CHANGE DID IT ACHIEVE?

The first Provincial Data Center was created in the Province of Limburg in the south of the Netherlands. Within a time frame of just one year, eight Data Centers were launched: one every six weeks. There are currently 14 centers across the Netherlands. Various types of data centers have so far emerged in the Netherlands, ranging from urban data centers in cities to a specially established rural data center (RDC) for rural municipalities. The UDC concept has attracted wide international interest.

WHAT WERE THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ACHIEVING IMPACT?

The organization that enables the urban data centers (CBS) is highly experienced, having been established in 1899 to respond to the need for independent and reliable information that advances our understanding of social issues. The legislation that enables the centers is [The Statistics Netherlands Act](#) which constitutes the legal basis for CBS.

Mindset and approach was also a critical component to the project's success. A combination of good vision and concept, together with strong leadership, adequate human and financial resources helped to drive it forward. The team employed a results-focused approach using a combination of time-boxing, perseverance, and the determination to jointly solve every challenge.

ANY SPECIFIC APPROACHES OR TOOLS THAT ALLOWED FOR EXPEDITED DELIVERY?

Independence - as an autonomous administrative authority (in Dutch: ZBO), CBS performs public service tasks but operates independently and not under the direct authority of a Dutch ministry. The Minister of Economic Affairs is politically responsible for relevant legislation, budget and conditions. CBS is financed from the state budget.

HOW WERE ANY CHALLENGES OVERCOME?

Many challenges were encountered. The innovation met resistance with CBS Statistics Netherlands and within the cities. Partly this was due to the fact that any innovation meets resistance, especially when two different types of organizations and staff needed to collaborate. There were also budget problems.

All of the challenges were responded to by organizing a joint steering committee in each urban data center with participants from that specific city and CBS Statistics Netherlands that successfully solved all the obstacles.

MULTI- LATERAL GOVERNANCE CG



Real Neighbourhoods for La Paz, Bolivia

PROJECT SUMMARY

Real Neighbourhoods for La Paz seeks to eradicate poverty through community development that is created through increased citizen participation in urban planning.

Project title:

Real Neighbourhood for La Paz

Project lead actor:

Municipality of La Paz

Project stakeholders:

World Bank, IDB, Govt. Of Venezuela, Municipality of La Paz

Location:

Bolivia

Year of implementation:

2005-2016

Core theme/s:

Participatory Governance, Community Development

SDGs:

1, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17

NUA principles:

- Leave no one behind , by ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions
- Ensure sustainable and inclusive urban economies
- Ensure environmental sustainability

AFINUA:

All components:

- National urban policies
- Urban legislation, rules and regulations
- Urban planning and design
- Urban economy and municipal finance
- Local implementation

Links to other global agendas:

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
Paris Climate Agreement

INTENT: WHAT WAS THE TARGET TO CHANGE?

The program aimed to transform marginal areas through better integration of urban space, reducing social and economic gaps, guaranteeing basic levels of services, promoting wellbeing and mitigating risks that make these citizens vulnerable in their current environment. The programme also created more opportunities for civic participation and engender greater cooperation with authorities in terms of neighbourhood public management initiatives, working towards the eradication of poverty through collective community development.

IMPLEMENTATION: HOW WAS THE PROJECT DELIVERED?

The project was delivered through a combination of physical works and community development exercises. It facilitated teamwork with citizens in a democratic arena, and provided the necessary tools for the efficient use of programme resources.

To start, neighbours were encouraged to commit themselves to the development of their community via a series of participatory planning practices as outlined in the Law of Popular Participation.

Next, local assemblies were held to identify community priorities in which neighbours could collectively agree on key goals in a democratic manner. Following that, the infrastructure works were executed by a private company contracted via a public bidding process whose progress was monitored via neighbourhood organizations - works committees formed to identify any deviations or obstacles, and then propose solutions to overcome these snags and difficulties.

Lastly, as a result of this process of community organization, local governance mechanisms were consolidated, thereby contributing to citizen mobilization and a sense of ownership, which in turn, ensured the maintenance of works and the longterm sustainability of the project.

IMPACT: WHAT CHANGE DID IT ACHIEVE?

Since the implementation of the Real Neighbourhoods and Communities Program, neighbourhood annual operational plans have proved to be a crucial tool for enabling neighbours and their civic organizations to participate in the allocation of public resources, particularly where there was a need for direct interventions to address specific problems, as well as maintain these initiatives long after their implementation.

These successes have proved seminal, inspiring other municipalities around the world to follow suit. The program has provided a model of methodological tools that can be replicated by any other interested municipality around the world. It has also become the underlying basis for the municipal program *Urban Centralities*, which promotes the harmonious de-concentration of administrative centers in the city.

WHAT WERE THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ACHIEVING IMPACT?

Digital Neighbourhood, a tool easily accessible through mobile phones, was used to monitor neighbourhoods identified for intervention programs. Following this, a second digital tool called Channelizes was launched. Currently, it is being tested in a number of neighbourhoods as a way to log problems with the municipality.

It is expected to become the fundamental interaction mechanism between citizens and public authorities for neighbourhood infrastructure, maintenance and sustainability.

ANY SPECIFIC APPROACHES OR TOOLS THAT ALLOWED FOR EXPEDITED DELIVERY?

As per the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) study, which certifies the financial health of the municipality and its budget planning and monitoring mechanisms, the Municipality of La Paz has been awarded an AA3 financial category status. This allows the Municipality to easily access credit to support major works such as the Real Neighbourhoods and Communities programme when needed.

HOW WERE ANY CHALLENGES OVERCOME?

During the tenure of the project, any funding shortfalls in public works projects were addressed via the local annual operative plan. This allowed neighbours to allocate the additional resources needed to pay for works or elements that may not have been envisaged during the initial design phases.

MULTI- LATERAL GOVERNANCE CITY



12345 Government Service Hotline, Guangzhou, China

PROJECT SUMMARY

'12345' Government Service-Hotline was created with the purpose of providing a "convenient, intelligent and efficient" service to solve people's livelihood requests, integrate public recommendations and place citizens' grievances before concerned authorities.

Project title:

12345 Government Service Hotline

Project lead actor:

Guangzhou 12345 Government Hotline Center

Project stakeholders:

11 district-level governments, 50 municipal government departments, 62 state-owned enterprises or public institutions, Guangzhou branches of central authorities, and people's organizations, etc., ranging from the Bureau of Public Security, Bureau of Education, Transportation Commission, Power Supply Bureau, Gas Group and Consumer Council, We platforms, China Telecom, Municipal Industry and Information Commission, Guangdong Eshore Technology Co., Ltd.

Location:

China

Year of implementation:

2015

Core theme/s:

Public participation, governance, digital tools

SDGs:

9, 10, 11(11.3 & 11.7), 16

NUA principles:

- Leave no one behind , by ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions
- Ensure sustainable and inclusive urban economies
- Ensure environmental sustainability

AFINUA:

All components:

- National urban policies
- Urban legislation, rules and regulations
- Urban planning and design
- Urban economy and municipal finance
- Local implementation

Links to other global agendas:

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

INTENT: WHAT WAS THE TARGET TO CHANGE?

As an international destination, commercial center and transportation hub, Guangzhou wanted to create an optimal environment for trade, tourism and quality of life, all important to the city's long-term improvement and sustainability. This requires effective access to services, particularly across siloed government departments, and a two way communications channel.

With the purpose of providing "convenient, intelligent and efficient" service, the hotline was established to solicit people's suggestions, solve people's livelihood demands and channel their discontent to the appropriate professionals for resolution. Since its establishment, they have collected 13.98 million cases of people's livelihood demands and coordinated relevant departments to resolve 1.753 million cases of demands in education, health care, transportation, water, electricity and gas supply, and community management. They have submitted nearly one hundred analysis reports and statistical reports to the Municipal Government across a variety of departments. It has now become an essential part for Guangzhou to make itself a livable city of "co-construction, sharing, and co-governance.

Thus the 12345 Government Service-Hotline was created with the purpose of providing a "convenient, intelligent and efficient" service to solve people's livelihood requests, integrate public recommendations and place citizens' grievances before concerned authorities.

This coordinated Government communication service can be accessed at any time, as part of China's efforts to streamline administration and optimize non-emergency services in areas like economic activity, market regulation, social work, public service, and ecological and environmental protection.

IMPLEMENTATION: HOW WAS THE PROJECT DELIVERED?

New governance, monitoring and maintenance structures were required, alongside technology to link across multiple telephone networks. The Chief Management Office of Guangzhou Municipal People's Government is responsible for the specific management and supervision by the China Telecom as a supplier to undertake the hotline call centre platform, customer service team, business operations management, multi channels and intelligent building outsourcing services.

Linking to We platforms was also integrated. We platforms include the telephone hotline 12345, a WeChat public account, 12345 WeChat online customer service, Guangzhou 12345 self-service inquiry mini program, and 12345 Government Service Hotline special column on the website of the Municipal Government.

IMPACT: WHAT CHANGE DID IT ACHIEVE?

The initiative utilized the resources of the government, integrated performance statistics more effectively and improved the government's overall administration capacity. For citizens, the convenience of dialing one hotline number that can satisfy all their demands for information, advice, complaints, suggestions, reports or requests for assistance is clear.

Also, thanks to this unified platform, governments, public enterprises and public institutions, as well as citizens are all more inter-connected and better integrated, facilitating more orderly and effective participation in the urban management system that has at its core values such as co-construction and co-governance.

WHAT WERE THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ACHIEVING IMPACT?

Based on full-sample statistics from the government service hotline, data analysis reports are published regularly to help governments at different levels identify citizens' concerns and drive service and operational improvements.

These reports are designed to analyze and identify the gravest concerns of citizens such as nighttime construction, pollution, online shopping scams, traffic safety and bike-sharing etc.

They also rank the competency of authorities via key indicators such as on-time completion rate, citizens' satisfaction rate and completion duration. These figures are circulated, motivating those lower down in the rankings to improve their performance and solve the problems with concrete measures learned from other departments.

ANY SPECIFIC APPROACHES OR TOOLS THAT ALLOWED FOR EXPEDITED DELIVERY?

The pressing demand from the public for more efficient government service delivery served as a catalyst in this case. Also, the desire from municipal government to put in place a robust platform for engaging with all citizens and then collectively envisage new benchmarks, performance indicators and other means of assessing user satisfaction, was another key driver.

HOW WERE ANY CHALLENGES OVERCOME?

The hotline proved so successful, the phonelines reached capacity quickly. An additional service was required and accelerated, known as Internet+hotline, a self-service mini program designed to handle several service items and complaint procedures. In this way, citizens are encouraged to use Internet channels to report problems, which in turn, helps reduce the traffic of phone calls.

Challenges related to coordination within departments, such as lack of cooperation, buck passing issues and the absence of clear applicable laws or responsibilities, are also logged. Any issues can be overcome via multiple means, including telephone communication, on-site investigation, meetings involving all interested parties, or in some instances, the decision to refer problems to the Legislative Affairs Office and the Commission Office for Public Sectors Reform for legal review and input etc.

Where some citizens' expectations have proved to be unrealistically high, leading to unreasonable demands or repeat complaints that prove to be false, proactive measures have been introduced, such making phone calls and offering patient explanation. Additionally, measures designed to deter prank calls or false complaints, such as fines, have also been introduced.

FINANCIAL MECHANISMS



Rubble to Mountains, Beirut, Lebanon

PROJECT SUMMARY

Investing finances and other resources in a rubble recycling and safe handling programme from Beirut's damaged areas to rehabilitate quarries and rebuild Lebanese mountains, instead of the financial costs required for waste removal companies and landfill, and subsequent environmental consequences.

Project title:

Rubble to Mountains

Project lead actor:

Beirut Municipality

Project stakeholders:

AUB Neighbourhood Initiative, Development Inc. SAL, the Lebanon Reforestation Initiative, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, Beirut Municipality, Forward Emergency Room of the Lebanese Army, port authorities in collaboration with Reel-ly, Spinneys Lebanon, Diageo Lebanon, Nestle Pure Life Lebanon, PepsiCo Arabia, and others.

Location:

Beirut, Lebanon

Year of implementation:

2020 - present

Core theme/s:

Financial mechanisms, Sustainable Waste Management, Multilateral partnerships and resourcing

SDGs:

9, 11, 13, 17

NUA principles:

Ensure sustainable and inclusive urban economies
Ensure environmental sustainability

AFINUA:

- Urban planning and design
- Urban economy and municipal finance
- Local implementation

Links to other global agendas:

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
Paris Climate Agreement

INTENT: WHAT WAS THE TARGET TO CHANGE?

On 4 August 2020 an explosion of ammonium nitrate at the Beirut port killed more than 200 people and injured over 7,500. It is estimated that the blast caused over USD 15 billion in property damage to some 77,000 households and directly impacted more than 300,000 people within a 3 km radius.

The explosion created an enormous amount of rubble. Before 2019, Lebanon usually spent \$420 million per year on solid waste management, which includes rubble and other construction waste. Business-as-usual would have meant paying an additional enormous sum for waste removal companies to haul the huge increase in shredded concrete, glass, plastic, aluminium, and metal to already-burdened landfills following the explosion. There is also the challenge of the existing waste management in Beirut. According to UNDP there is 941 illegal dumpsites in Lebanon. Most of these dumpsites consist of construction and demolition waste in areas that lead to serious environmental impact.

A local business owner who specializes in glass and plastic recycling, saw the problem and through working with a local university professor, began coordinating volunteers to help the city clean-up effort. He saw the opportunity to segregate the rubble and extract the glass and plastics out to use to rebuild the city, and take the rubble to rehabilitate quarries instead of landfill.

IMPLEMENTATION: HOW WAS THE PROJECT DELIVERED?

Through connections made between a local business, volunteers, a reforestation initiative, a university and the Beirut municipality, the project was initiated. Further partners then joined, and through a consortium of United Nations agencies, private sector and non-governmental organization partners, the collecting, sorting and reusing of the debris began, preventing an environmental waste crisis.

The first real success for the project was finding a place to store the rubble and glass debris, as part of what the group was trying to avoid was transporting it any distance. They identified empty property in the Karantina neighbourhood, close to the blast site, and the Beirut Municipality granted permission. Then negotiations with the port authorities led to securing the adjacent land for sorting and crushing. A Finnish industrial debris-crusher was sent from India, and a glass crusher was procured from China. Initial funding has come from UN-Habitat and UNICEF. Currently the project is conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted to the ministry of environment (MoE). And the World Bank are waiting for the approval to re-initiate financial negotiations with the consortium.

IMPACT: WHAT CHANGE DID IT ACHIEVE?

The project began within days of the blast. As of January 2021, about 6,000 of around 160,000 tonnes of rubble stored at the collection site in Karantina has been sorted according to material type.

When it's complete, 150,000 tons of rubble will be refashioned into mountainsides, outdoor furniture made of ROGP (rejects of glass and plastic). The debris-crusher will be donated back to Beirut Municipality to improve routine recycling in the city and have a sustainable solution for demolition debris.

Rubble to Mountains has also created livelihood opportunities for over 100 daily labourers, many of whom are women, with the aim of creating livelihoods for thousands more making the initiative not only beneficial for the environment but also giving financial support to breadwinners and heads of households.

Ultimately, it is envisioned that the initiative will create a circular economy model where the rubble collection site becomes a hub for the transformation of Lebanon's construction and demolition waste into biodegradable material used by the initiative's other outputs.

It is likely another result will be the understanding of what can be achieved in the face of a grave situation when a problem-solving idea is combined with collaboration at the highest levels.

WHAT WERE THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ACHIEVING IMPACT?

The crisis created by the blast served as impetus to act quickly, alongside the local knowledge of local businesses, volunteers and the university. There was also an upfront voluntary investment of time and resources by the consortium of participants, which then led to financial investment from local stakeholders, and donations of machinery from other countries.

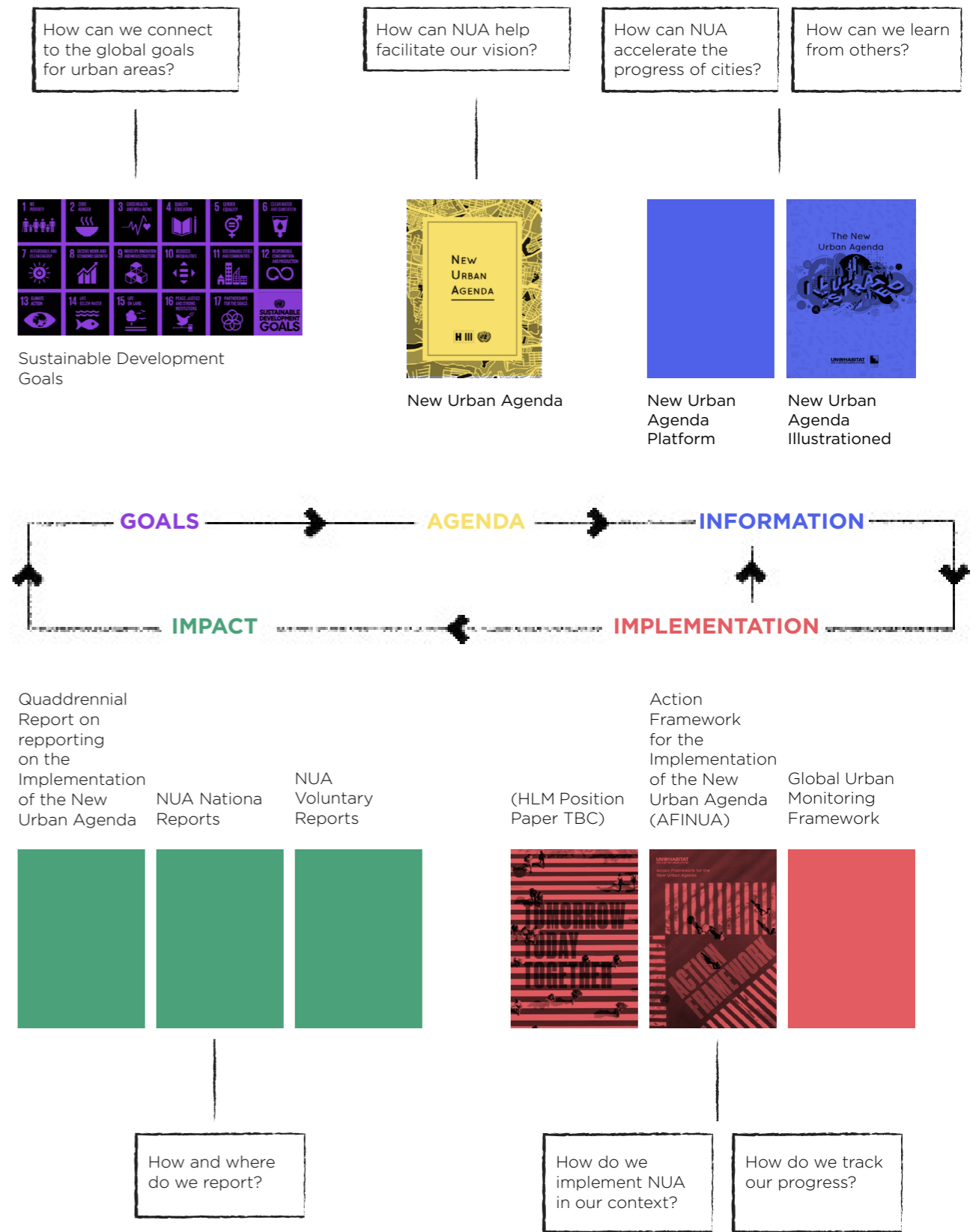
ANY SPECIFIC APPROACHES OR TOOLS THAT ALLOWED FOR EXPEDITED DELIVERY?

Private sector engagement fuelled a holistic response to an urban crisis with each party bringing their own expertise, innovation and best practices to ensure a wider reach.

HOW WERE ANY CHALLENGES OVERCOME?

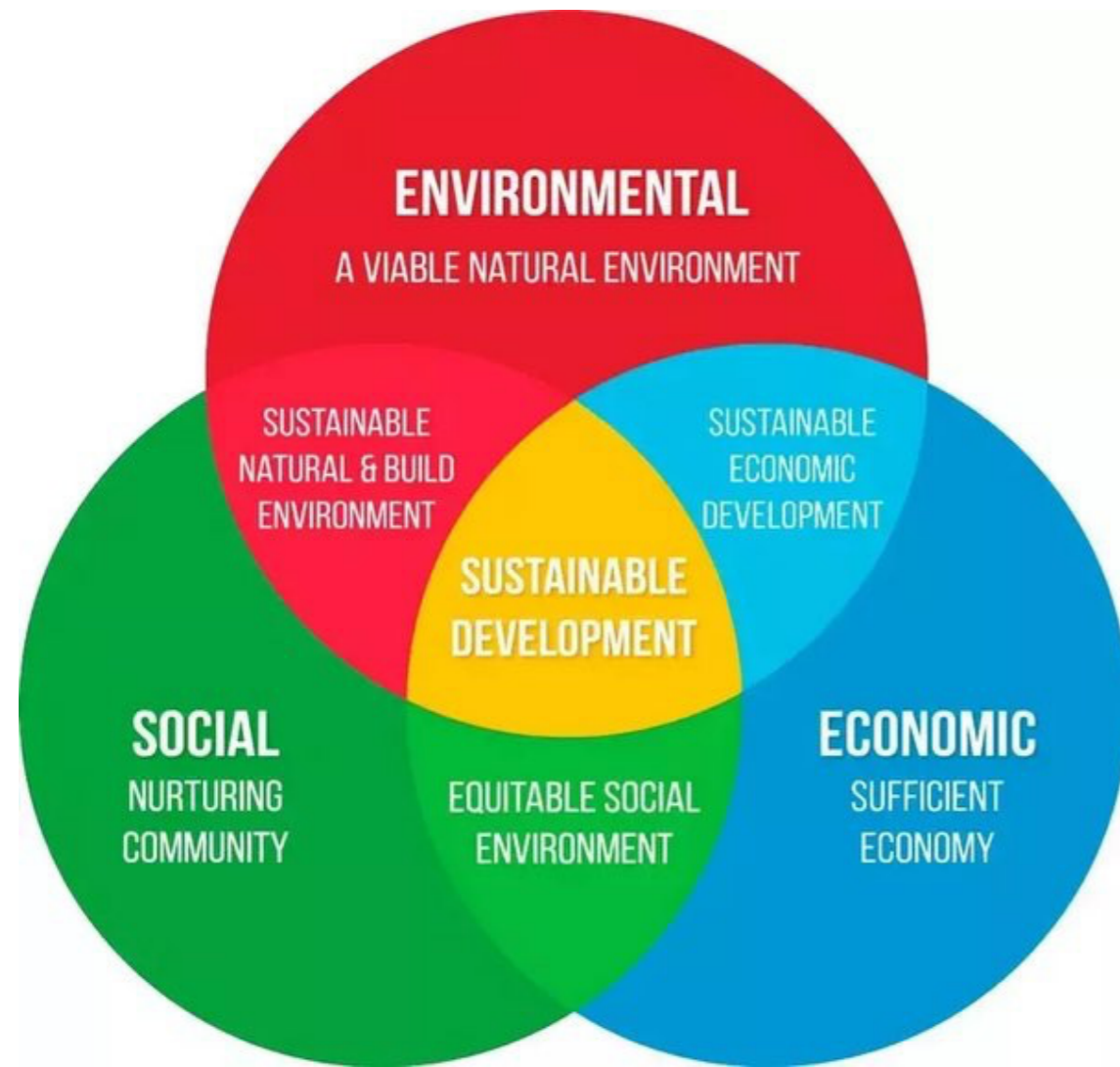
Clear communication across all parties was critical for effective implementation. The challenges were enormous, but through collaboration, the idea has attracted funding, and work is continuing successfully.

4. NEW URBAN AGENDA RESOURCES



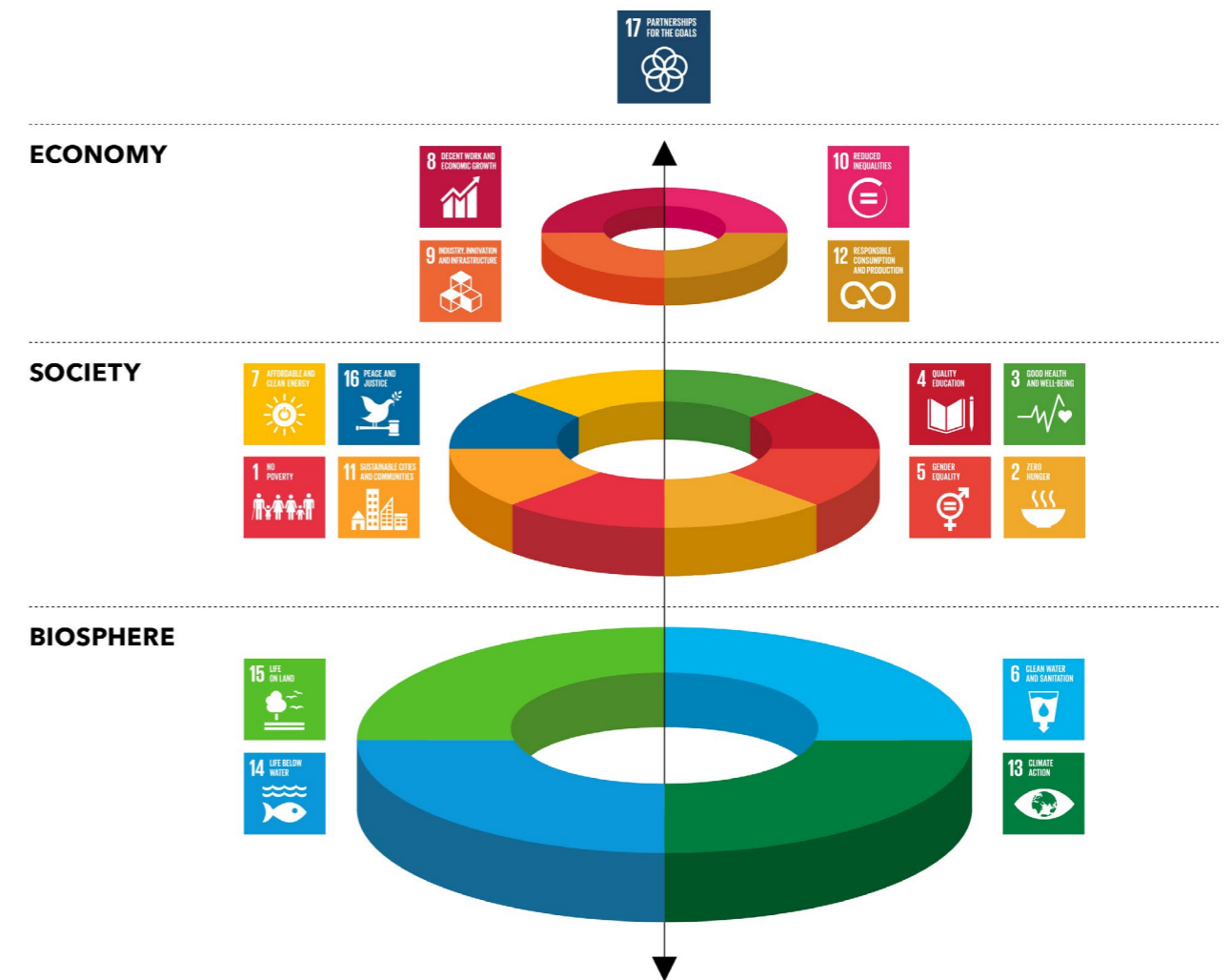
NUA Resources

The UN has a number of documents to support the implementation of the NUA, and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. There are resources that provide information and best practice, approaches for implementation and ways to measure impact.



NUA Resources

The interconnected nature of sustainable development.

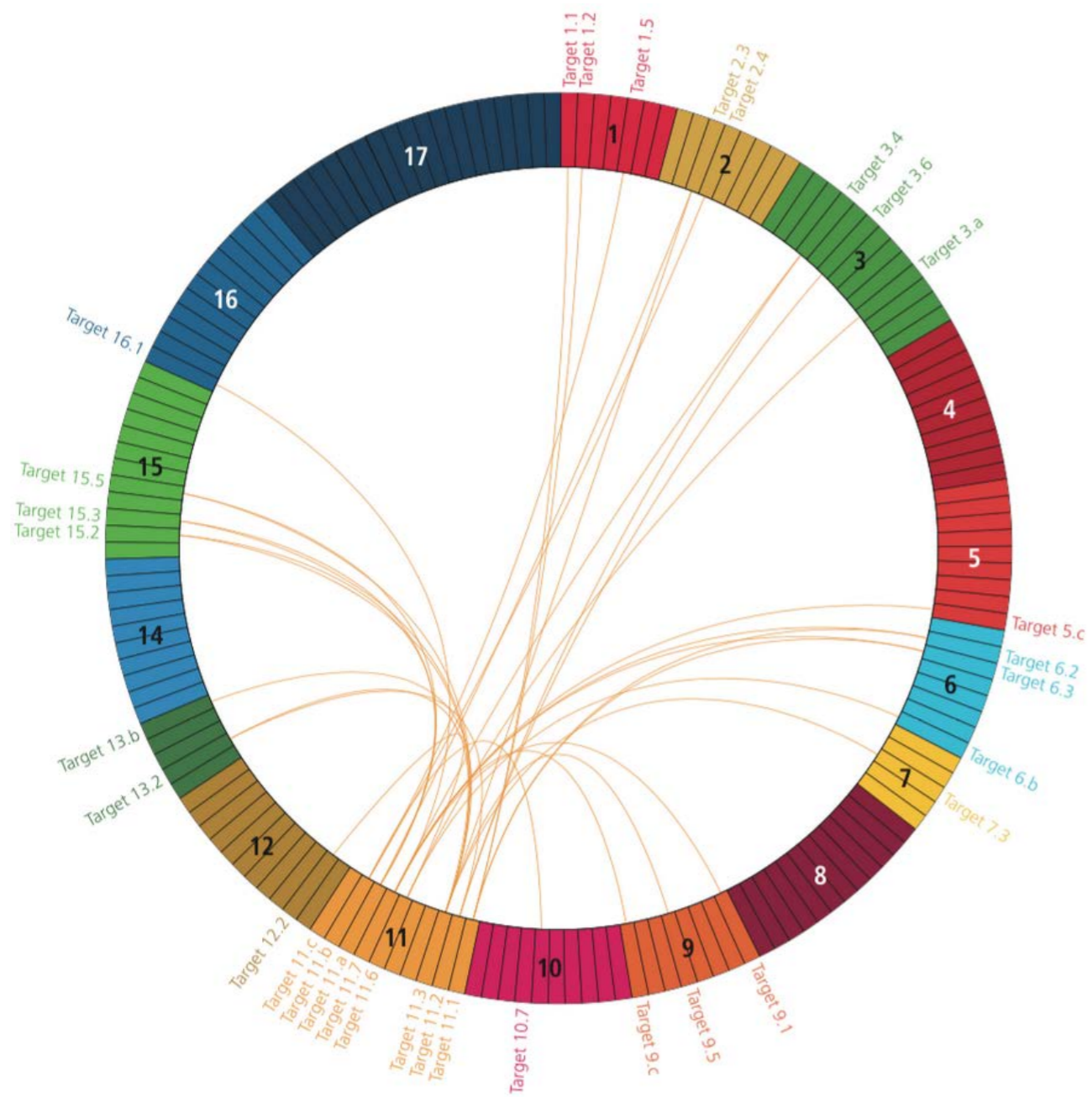


NUA Resources

This figure illustrates the intertwined nature of social-ecological systems, and, by extension, the SDGs that are designed to effect progress within these systems. Actions on the SDGs are best informed by a systemic view and thus better delivered in partnership that bring a broader perspective to point solutions. As Folcke, et al (2016) argue, “The focus is shifting from the environment as externality to the biosphere as precondition of social justice, economic development, and sustainability.”

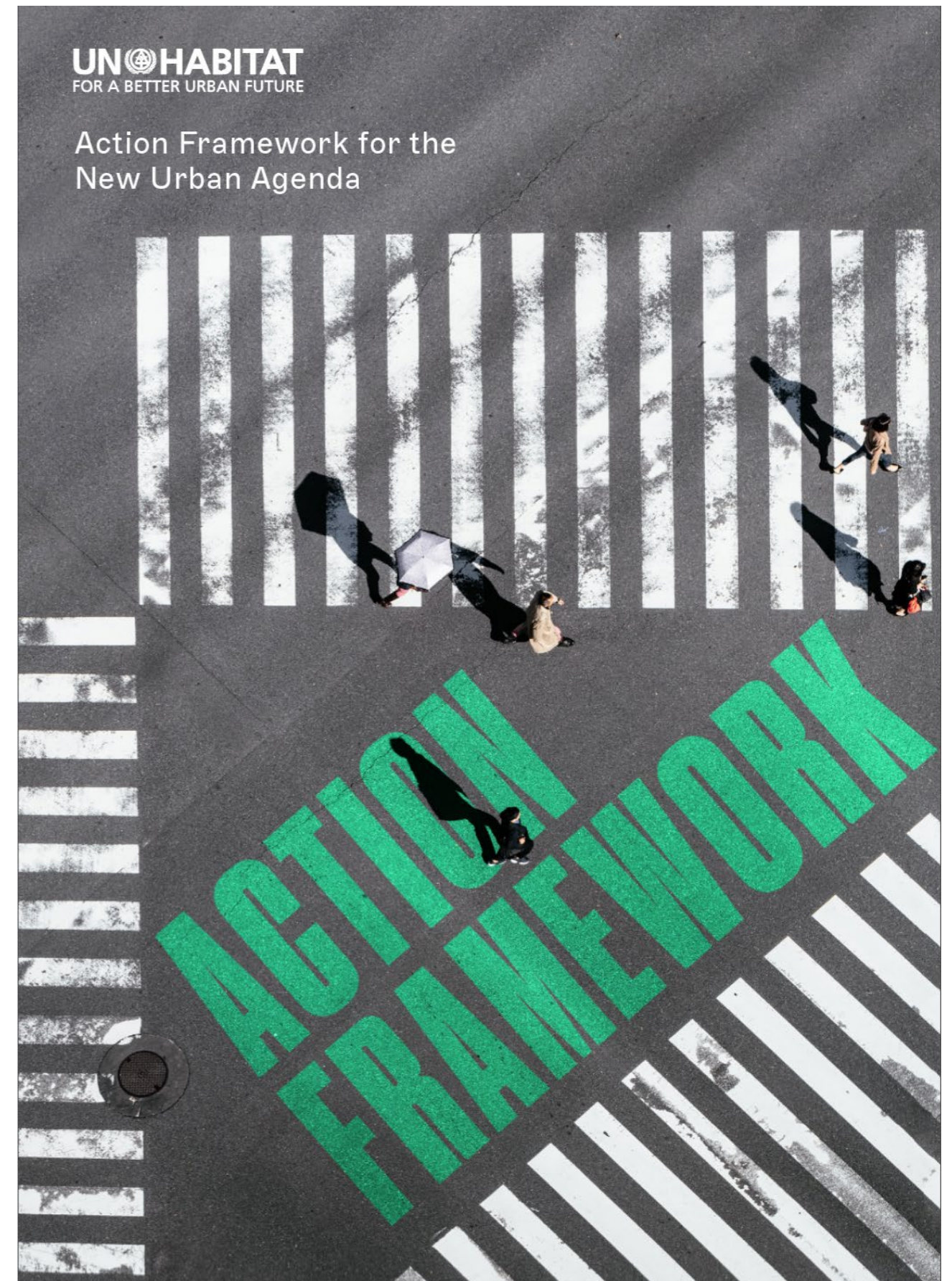
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NUA Resources

Visual representation of the key interlinkages between SDG 11 and other SDG's



NUA Resources

The Action Framework for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda

15. SUSTAINABLE

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