

The Climate/ Environment/ Greening of Cities in the NUA : Concluding Remarks

The Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda in quick succession, have focused global attention on development while the world faces new challenges on peace and development.

The fast pace of urbanisation and the concentration of economic and social activities in urban areas, make cities a paramount actor in determining the course of development- whether development will be inclusive and without damage to the environment and whether there will be widespread peace, security and prosperity.

A huge back-log persists in developing countries in the provision of basic services of water, sanitation, accessibility or mobility, waste management and energy. The failure to keep up service provision in the face of urbanisation is because of the failure to plan in advance of urbanisation and growth.

The New Urban Agenda with its focus on urban planning, legislation and economy as the fundamental levers of change hold the promise of a new future where no one is left behind and provision of basic services is assured.

However, planning must go together with implementation. UN-Habitat's experience in this area has shown that real improvement in access to basic services in realistic time-frames happen when policies are improved simultaneously with actions on the ground that provide tangible benefits to people; for example the provision of say adequate water and sanitation to a poor urban community within a period of one year. In the context of the NUA, such practical implementation on the ground can be unscaled to city-wide improvements through urban planning, regulation and economy. In other words, pilot projects on basic services can be entry points to revamp urban planning, governance and economy leading to a virtuous cycle where new inhabitants (e.g in city extensions) also receive adequate services.

UN-Habitat seeks to work in this pragmatic manner and appeals for support that will enable it to develop and implement innovative approaches that improve services in real time while contributing to policy dialogue.