Towards a New Urban Agenda: Integrating Nexus principles

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ESCAP: The regional arm of the UN for Asia-Pacific

- Part of UN Secretariat: 62 member states - 58 are regional members
- ESCAP covers the world’s most populous region - two thirds of humanity
- Based in Bangkok, with 4 Sub-regional offices
- ESCAP fosters:
  - regional cooperation to promote social & economic development
  - normative, analytical & technical cooperation at the regional level
  - a platform for South-South dialogue / exchange of practices
Towards Sustainable Cities: ESCAP

Sustainable Urban Development

- Economically productive and equitable
- Environmentally sustainable/Resilient to natural disasters
- Inclusive & liveable cities of opportunity
- Effective governance & institutional arrangements
In 2018 the region will pass a critical threshold: more people will live in cities than in rural areas.

The Asia-Pacific region has over 2.1 billion urban citizens – an increase of 630 million since 2000.

By 2050 two-thirds of region will live in cities: 3.2 billion.

Proportional shifts + numerical impact.

Demographic, economic & spatial dimensions.
The need:

- To plan for an urban future in which up to 80% of the region will live in urban agglomerations by 2100

- Such transformation requires to shift focus from quantity to quality – from models of exploitation to ones of investment

- To understand that cities are no longer ‘bounded’

- For data to support holistic national urban policy – including geospatial data
Existing institutions/policy frameworks require transformation/renewal: from competitive to collaborative governance

Policy responses must consider impacts/relationships beyond urban boundaries & across sector silos

Shift from short term resource exploitation towards long term investment

Achieving effective stakeholder engagement: municipal government, the private sector, research, CSOs

Supporting mutually beneficial actions & policies for interdependent urban & peri-urban areas: Need for integrated and well-organized spatial planning

Financial, technological, political, organizational & information-related challenges
Greater understanding of the role of cities in national, regional, global development

Cities & economic transformation: a qualified success story

Rise of the world’s largest middle class – but an emerging equity crisis

Creating cities for all requires harnessing diversity and expanding opportunity

Investing in social policy and inclusion: the next driver of growth?

Transforming urban economies: from quantity to quality of growth
The region needs to urgently enhance its environmental quality

- Persistent & newly emerging challenges
- Shifting consumption/production patterns threaten to overwhelm resources (including land)
- Resource gaps are growing: energy, water – waste to resource/circular economy principles must underpin future strategies
- It is no longer possible to address these crises in isolation: integrated/nexus solutions are essential for eco-efficiency
Renewing urban governance agendas: moving beyond centralised or decentralised models

Resource footprint of cities, as well as ecosystem boundaries, transcend administrative boundaries, calling for coordination across actors and institutions

Strengthening planning and policy frameworks - closing the urban finance gaps

The need for integrated and holistic national urban policies/frameworks: managing cities as national development assets

Underpinned by quality/accessible data
Moving from sectoral to holistic frameworks: from fragmentation to integration through innovation

Balancing decentralization and local level fragmentation with national & regional planning: getting the institutional relationships right

Integrated sustainable development requires financing to match action: the right enabling factors/incentives

Planning to meet current and projected resource needs requires data and transparency in decision-making

Creating a supportive and incentivizing governance framework

Commitments to equity & access underpin social dimensions
The urban nexus aims at sustainably managing the critical resources of water, energy and food through an integrated, collaborative and participatory approach to urban development. As such it is of great relevance to both the sustainable development goals and the Habitat III new urban agenda.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>By integrating policies and measures across critical resources, the nexus approach aims to:</th>
<th>By shifting towards sustainable resource management, the urban nexus fundamentally promotes sustainable urban development, through:</th>
<th>Integrating “resource nexus” into agreed international development goals:</th>
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<td>• enhance synergies; • reduce trade-offs • ultimately support transition to sustainability</td>
<td>• sustainable urban &amp; peri-urban ecosystem services • integrated and well-organized spatial development • looking beyond the rural-urban dichotomy</td>
<td>• Balancing the social, economic, environmental dimensions • Achieving coherence across goals</td>
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Towards a ‘New Urban Agenda’?

- Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development
- Goal 11: “Making Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable”
- But there is a need to regionalise & localise global agendas
THANK YOU

Please visit our website:
http://www.unescap.org/our-work/environment-development/urban-development/urban-nexus