

Guest Column: by Robert Glasser

Towards implementation of the 2030 agenda at local level

The New Urban Agenda to be adopted at Habitat III, along with its sister agreements that form the 2030 Development Agenda – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change – set out the ambition needed to meet the challenges of our world. The issues addressed are deeply inter-related. Without disaster risk reduction, sustainable development is impossible, just as climate change must be addressed through actions that are synchronised with disaster risk reduction, so as not to undermine the achievement of mutual goals.

Implementation of the Paris Agreement cannot come soon enough. We are repeatedly witnessing record-breaking temperatures, and other tangible impacts of increasingly frequent and intense hazards. Recorded disaster events in the past decade, of which 90% have been climate-related, have affected almost two billion people and cost the global economy trillions of dollars. The world has learned the hard way that assumptions about what creates hazard have to be constantly assessed and revised in line with the pace of social and economic development. We must become transformative in our approaches in order to reduce the increasingly complex disaster risks of today. These approaches also need to consider the strain placed on the humanitarian assistance system by conflicts which have cost countless lives and triggered the largest forced displacement of people since the end of the Second World War.

If it is to be done well, disaster risk reduction requires coordination and the full engagement of all state institutions at national and local levels. A key target of the Sendai Framework is therefore to increase the number of countries with local and national disaster risk management plans, in order to avoid the creation of new risk by promoting compliance with building codes, proper land use, environmental protection and poverty reduction. Local government is on the sharp end of disaster risk, and has key knowledge which needs to be shared.

With that in mind, the extension of UNISDR's Making Cities Resilient Campaign to 2020 is key to achieving the targets of the Sendai Framework. Launched in 2010, the campaign has grown into a network of over 3,300 cities, towns and local governments, making it the globe's largest association of local government partnerships. Members are committed to implementing the Ten Essentials for making cities resilient, based upon the Sendai Framework, as well as indicators of many other parts of the 2030 Agenda, most notably Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

The ambition now is to increase the membership to 5,000 by 2020, and to have at least 500 local strategies developed. The campaign, and its Steering Committee now chaired by UN Habitat's Urban Resilience team, together with its partners will assist these cities in formulating their local strategies through application of the Ten Essentials, thereby boosting the implementation of the Sendai Framework, but also the entire 2030 Agenda, given that all 17 Sustainable Development Goals are affected by disaster risk. The reduction of risks posed by natural and man-made hazards will be critical to keep cities around the globe on a sustainable development track.

The Sendai Framework was endorsed in March, 2015, by all UN Member States. It aims to reduce mortality, numbers of people affected, economic losses and damage to critical infrastructure from environmental, biological and technological hazards, through to 2030 and beyond. The world needs to embrace the Sendai framework. More than anything, this means continuing to shift the emphasis from managing disasters to managing the risks that are driving those disasters. Lives and economic assets saved and protected prove that investment in disaster risk reduction is cost-effective as well as having many quality of life co-benefits thanks to its implementation.

The sheer depth and breadth of the 2030 Agenda presents various challenges, notably to local governments in their understanding and implementation of the various agreements. The New Urban Agenda, being the last to be adopted, marks a unique opportunity to build meaningful coherence between them. Their common goals lessen the challenge and allow for mutual implementation to be more easily manageable at the local level. If we are successful, we can expect to see a new wave of momentum to implement the 2030 Agenda by countries at all levels.



Dr. Robert Glasser, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
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This information brochure summarizes key aspects of UN-Habitat's new programme producing measurable indices for urban government resilience building efforts.

For enquiries on the City Resilience Profiling Programme and the Urban Resilience Institute please contact Dan Lewis, Chief, Urban Risk Reduction Unit: dan.lewis@unhabitat.org

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya;
Tel: +254-20-7623120;
Fax: +254-20-76234266/7 (Central Office)
infohabitat@unhabitat.org

CRPP HEADQUARTERS
Sant Pau Art Nouveau Site, Sant Leopold Pavilion
C. Sant Antoni Maria Claret, 167
08025 Barcelona, Spain
Tel: + 34 933 900 520

UN HABITAT
www.unhabitat.org

CITY RESILIENCE PROFILING PROGRAMME

Habitat III Special Edition



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Old town of Quito © Simon Matzinger

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UN-Habitat and the City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP)

The CRPP goes beyond conventional approaches to 'risk reduction,' delivering a forward-looking, multi-scale, multi-sectoral, multi-hazard, multi-stakeholder model for building resilience that recognizes the complexities and unique value of cities, and the inherent interdependencies of each part of an urban system. Launching in Quito during the Habitat III conference, UN Habitat's global Urban Resilience Programme includes the CRPP as its analytic approach to transforming urban planning, development and governance to build resilient human settlements, as well as its normative work on: network stewardship, including as recently announced the Chairing of the UNISDR Making Cities Resilience Campaign Steering Committee; standards development with UN and ISO partners; an applied research platform engaging the URP Academic Network; and other operational projects with partner cities and countries.

As the main UN agency responsible for ensuring the sustainable development of human settlements, UN-Habitat is strategically placed to coordinate the humanitarian and development efforts of multiple actors and policy makers at all levels in the common pursuit of urban resilience. This is strengthened this year with the launching during the World Humanitarian Summit in May, of the Global Alliance for Urban Crisis, a network of 70 UN, NGO, Academic and professional partners and local authorities all parties to an 'Urban Charter' outlining common ground, common purpose, and facilitating common action in cities recovering from critical events.

The Urban Resilience Programme's comparative advantage is strengthened by these partnership networks founded on integrated approaches to urban resilience, with strategic partners including the Medellin Collaboration on Urban Resilience launched in 2014 and most recently welcoming Cities Alliance together with the UNISDR Secretariat, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, C40 Climate Leadership Group, 100 Resilient Cities, The World Bank Group, Inter-American Development Bank, Rockefeller Foundation, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Reconstruction.

The combined contribution of these networks to the post 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, and the New Urban Agenda emerging from Habitat III is considerable in scope and in scale, and represent a major community of practice focused on generating and providing support to building resilience in cities around the world.

Urban resilience refers to the ability of any urban system to withstand and recover quickly from multiple shocks and stresses and maintain continuity of services.

CRPP Events



Global Alliance for Urban Crisis launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul

The Global Alliance for Urban Crises was launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in a Special Session moderated by BBC journalist, Lyce Doucet, who prompted participants with the question, "How do we achieve urban resilience?" David Milliband, President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee, responded with, "We need a different kind of aid system. 60% of refugees are now in urban areas...the humanitarian sector hasn't yet changed its practices and principles to cope with this change."

The Alliance arose out of the need to address growing urbanization and the need for a paradigm shift in urban response. The Alliance Charter has over 65 signatories to date. Signatories to the Charter committed to four key areas, adapting humanitarian action in an urban world:

- Tailoring humanitarian response to the urban context by developing shared assessment and profiling tools, promoting joint analysis, and adapting coordination mechanisms;
- Developing or working with existing global, regional and national rosters to facilitate the deployment of urban leaders, managers and technical experts;
- Building the evidence base on the specific characteristics of protracted displacement in urban areas, and contributing to the design of appropriate and cost-effective responses, with particular regard to protection of vulnerable people, shelter, basic services and infrastructure, and;
- Ensuring that initiatives focused on building urban resilience incorporate components on resilient response and recovery from crises, and that they leverage greatest impact in cities most at risk of humanitarian emergencies.

Initiatives towards these areas are currently underway, as the Alliance is formalized. For more information on the Alliance, please visit: urbancrises.org.

During the World Humanitarian Summit Special Session for the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, actor and humanitarian Sean Penn stressed the importance of preparedness towards resilience in crisis response. "It's always been that prevention is the best practice." Penn stated. Further iterating the importance of including local authorities during crisis and preparedness, Penn emphasized, "It's all in the way things are discussed ahead of time...to get the job done and responded to."

Toward the Urban Resilience Institute: aligning theories and practices for a more sustainable and resilient urban future

City resilience and its practices have been emerging from disaster recovery, responses and climate adaptations through local, regional and international actions. Built on a range of existing expertise and knowledge from engineering to risk management, urban resilience is increasingly fed by different disciplines and theories in order to provide an integrated view of urban challenges. The need of a more comprehensive and multidisciplinary framing of urban resilience, in line while retrofitted by practices, is becoming a necessary governance mind-set for advancing toward a more resilient and sustainable urban future.

UN CRPP has been working on this necessary alignment challenge with partner universities (Cornell, National University of Singapore, RMIT, TU-Darmstadt, Gran Sasso Science Institute, Polytechnic of Catalonia and International University of Catalonia) and international networks like RESURBE and the Urban Resilience Research Network. The common effort is leading to a forthcoming global platform to be named Urban Resilience Institute (URI), which mission will be to strengthen the nexus among urban resilience research, practices and policies. In the light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda call for integrating resilience, sustainability and a more equitable pattern of urban development, the URI will support the integration of different multilateral frameworks and urban management guiding principles, bridging the need of decreasing urban and people vulnerability to disasters (Sendai Risk Reduction 2015-2030) while enhancing urban sustainability and infrastructures retrofitting (City-Level Decoupling).

Progresses been made and the pathway to the official launching of URI in early 2017 will be illustrated in Quito, during the HABITAT III Conference

Highlights from the Barcelona Resilience Week 16 and next edition

From 14-18 March 2016 UN-Habitat's City Resilience Profiling Programme, the City Council of Barcelona and BCN Urban Resilience Partnership hosted the Barcelona Resilience Week, a global platform for discussion and learning between leading cities and companies working to build more resilient communities all over the world.

More than 370 registrations, over 100 speakers and over 50 cities attended and were represented with the aim to give voice and connect cities, while providing the opportunity to learn about ground-breaking resilience topics, share and exchange experiences and best practices and gain practical knowledge.

Moreover last year's event was organized in High-level panels discussions, parallel sessions, side events, side visits and networking space which offered attendees opportunities to create new contacts.

Additionally to that major current affairs related to Resilience such as the topic of migration was analysed in different sessions with the highlight of the participation of the Mayor of Barcelona and the Mayor of Athens.

Stay tuned to @City Resilience and Facebook.com/cityresilience for more details of the next edition.

UN-Habitat and UfM join forces to promote sustainable urban development in the Mediterranean

UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr Joan Clos and UfM Deputy Secretary-General for Transport and Urban Development Ambassador Yigit Alpogan signed a Memorandum of Understanding to undertake joint actions for an integrated approach to socially and environmentally sustainable urban development.

Both parties agreed to find common responses to the pressing challenges facing urban areas in the Mediterranean region and have identified several areas of collaboration with special regard to water management, risk reduction and resilience.

"The effects of climate change and the phenomenal shift towards urbanisation – 6 out of every 10 people in the world are expected to reside in urban areas by 2030 – are already being felt and are bound to intensify in the coming years. There is thus a need to mobilise all actors, national governments, local authorities, academia, businesses and citizens, to ensure that the growth of cities and urban areas is turned into opportunities," said UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr Joan Clos. "The UfM has a central role in furthering these goals in the Mediterranean region."

UfM Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alpogan said: "The Mediterranean region is in the middle of a strong spatial transformation linked to population growth, widespread urbanisation and deep changes in its political, social and economic model. This transformation is particularly felt in its cities, which are also confronted with new environmental impacts. In response to these challenges, and with the ultimate aim of improving the liveability of Mediterranean urban areas, the UfM actively promotes sustainable urban development in the region following an integrated and cooperative approach, as well as regionally-applicable solutions, focusing on youth as a key driver for stability in the region."



UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr Joan Clos and UfM Deputy Secretary-General for Transport and Urban Development Ambassador Yigit Alpogan together with other representatives during the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding. © Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean

UN-Habitat early this year joined the RESCCUE project

The RESCCUE project launched in May 2016 ("Resilience to cope with Climate Change in Urban Areas – a multisectoral approach focusing on water") aims to provide practical and innovative models and tools to end-users facing climate change challenges to build more resilient cities.

Funded through the EC H2020 window, the project will provide tools to assess urban resilience from a multisectoral approach, for current and future climate scenarios and including multiple hazards.

This holistic approach to urban resilience will enable city managers and urban systems operators to decide the optimal investments to cope with future situations.

RESCCUE is a 48-month duration project built around three research sites Barcelona, Lisbon, Bristol, and is led by a consortium of 18 partners led by Aquatec, Suez Water Advanced Solutions.



Smart City Expo World congress

From 15-17 November the sixth edition of the Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC) will take place. It is considered to be as one of the most important global meetings on urban innovation and CRPP once again will be contributing to several events engaging city representatives and private sector companies interested in UN-Habitat's work on urban resilience.

As agreed in previous meetings, UN-Habitat, through its City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP), teamed up with the organizers of the SCEWC to ensure that a focus on resilience and sustainable human settlements will also be included in this edition.

In this regard, CRPP will gather together panellists to a discussion moderated by Mr Dan Lewis, Chief, Risk Reduction and Resilience UN-Habitat under the title: Technology in resilient recovery

