Towards an Urban Agenda for Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Promoting the Role of Cities in Sustainable Development in Island Systems

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Presented by

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Purpose of Today’s Session:

(i) Renew and revisit commitments for existing regional SIDS urban frameworks, processes and actions (where from?)

(ii) Build commitment, support and define where possible a potential SIDS Urban Agenda to support global, regional and country implementation of the NUA and Agenda 2030 (where to?)

Purpose of this Presentation:

(i) Focus on the special urban challenges and opportunities of SIDS - Pacific, Caribbean plus African, Indian Ocean and others, and

(ii) Outline the need for a SIDS Urban Agenda and what this may look like to further develop frameworks, processes and actions to localize SDGs (No 11 especially) and implementation of the NUA
Small Island Development States (SIDS): Diverse Setting for Sustainable Development + Urban

SIDS: 3 main groupings

SIDS sit within a Rich Policy Setting

Prior to Habitat 3 and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and SDGs


- Pacific and Caribbean Urban Forums produced the regional frameworks: Caribbean Urban Agenda and the New Pacific Urban Agenda

- Local and national initiatives

Since Habitat 3 and the NUA

NUA Policies: Key Elements

NUA is a commitment to a global policy framework promoting well managed urbanisation and urban development. Is broad emphasising “inclusion, innovation and integration”.

Quito Implementation Plan based on:

* The NUA ‘Transformative Commitments for Sustainable Urban Development’ – 3 key pillars

* The NUA ‘Effective Implementation’ of ‘Transformative Commitments’ – 3 key pillars

* Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA) April 2017 – 5 key pillars adding to ‘Means of Implementation’

There are 4 references to SIDS in the NUA: Section 19 is strongest recognizing ‘particular attention’ be given to the unique issues and challenges of SIDS; Section 64 mentions SIDS CC and natural disasters, and Section 114 refers to SIDS integrated land use planning.
SDG 11 Policies: Key Elements

SDG 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”

- Achieving SDG 11 also adds to SDG 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere; SDG 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; SDG 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. All SDGs interrelated

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

The NUA and SDGs provide an opportunity in SIDS to galvanize interest, renew commitments and find new ways of implementing the NUA and SDGs
Overview of Urban Setting of SIDS - What unites SIDS?

* Diverse geographical locations and size: in Pacific, Caribbean plus Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas + large/small

* Combined population of 65 million with 59% in urban areas (UN-Habitat, 2015)

* Annual urbanisation rates vary from 4% to 16% in peri urban areas

* Some SIDS 100% urbanized such as Nauru, Niue and Singapore while some have low rates such as PNG and Trinidad and Tobago (14%)

* Dominance of a primate city - single urban focus/spatial “cluster”

* Urbanisation process is economic and/or population driven!!!!~
Specific Urban Challenges in SIDS: What unites SIDS?

- **Ocean/land nexus.** In the Caribbean, more than 50% of the population lives within 1.5 km of the sea primarily on low-lying land. In the Pacific, approximately 50% of the population lives in settlements within 30 km of a coast (World Resources Institute, 2011)

- **Services/infrastructure/'human rights’.** Major deficits in meeting a high demand from the urban population for adequate ‘climate resilient’ infrastructure for water, roads and sanitation, port and aviation infrastructure, housing, environmental and waste management and sustainable forms of energy

- **Informality/informal settlements.** Growing informal settlements - e.g. 55% in Port Moresby - flourishing in adverse locations such as riverbanks and flood prone lands many of which many are first to experience CC and natural disasters. Over 50% of the settlements in Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Thomas, Jamaica, are within 100 metres of a waterway susceptible to flooding
Specific Urban Challenges in SIDS: What unites SIDS?

- **Limited capacity** in technical and policy staff at local, city and national levels for coordinated planning and urban management both strategic regulatory and institutional levels – one result is that building and planning standards, for example, are not understood or enforced and hence CC adaptation and mitigation opportunities not maximized.

- **Institutional capacity is problematic** for the scale, nature and demands of SIDS urban. Actions need national and local prioritization.

- **Meaning of ‘public interest’ and need for ‘urban planning’** still not widely accepted and understood - hence, land tenure ‘messy’ and urban planning and management of urbanization remains a mixed priority on development agendas.

- **SIDS unique context** reinforces the NUA narrative that urbanization is multi sectoral and requires a cross disciplinary system and cross spatial boundary approach. National and local policy slowly recognizing this reality.
Urban Challenges of SIDS: What unites SIDS?

– The reality? SIDS urban sits within broader sustainable development challenges and vulnerabilities: most prominent is climate change (CC) and disaster resilience, and CC mitigation including expanding towns and cities, impact of reef ecosystems, livelihoods, community and tourism assets, etc

– SIDS urban cannot be divorced from the social, physical, spatial and economic realities of CC/natural disasters

– Unique spatial and social-cultural patterns on ‘big and small islands’ means all SIDS have an urban coastal focus at the interface of ocean and CC/natural disasters: land and sea impacts and consequences

– Mixed economic growth opportunities/private sector

– The ‘depth and breadth’ of urban is inextricably connected across space requiring coordinated and integrated island approaches
So, what is Urban in SIDS?? What makes it socially, physically and economically unique?

Urban = modern in different local contexts: urban villages, trans-local, informality, traditional ways based on strong socio cultural orders.
Moving the SIDS Urban Agenda Forward

– New NUA policies equate to new ways of looking at, interpreting and resolving complex urban issues

– Resilience is one new construct shifting from natural CC and natural disasters to manmade impacts – and the ability to ‘bounce back’ - to pre planning for all events at the individual, community and systems level

– Resilience has become ‘holistic’ but also relies on other levels to effect change/resources/power

– So, will it be ‘business as usual’? Can we critically reflect to move forward?
Towards a SIDS Urban Agenda???? What would it look like?

* a commitment/recommitment to NUA and SDGs especially SDG 11 – policy integration on ‘safe, sustainable and resilient cities’

* a commitment to the AFINUA key themes - National Urban Policies, Urban legal frameworks, Urban Planning and Design, Urban Economies and Local Implementation

* a series of linked regional and sub regional plans and polices including key urban (national and city polices, city form and location, housing, services, governance, green infrastructure and quality public spaces, etc.) and broader sustainable development challenges (CC, natural disasters, resilience, adaptation, participatory/bottom up, etc)

* outline regional and sub regional goals/objectives/outcomes to reflect unique circumstances/priorities
Towards a SIDS Urban Agenda???? What would it look like?

* Prioritization of key urban development and management themes and actions in each sub-region - such as cross sector planning (including urban spatial planning and national plans), integrated coastal zone management, human rights approach (which includes housing, services, informal settlements etc), 'good governance' (with emphasis on community based approaches and local buy-in) and capacity building and implementation (which includes knowledge sharing - creation, sharing good practice, Urban Development Programs (links priority projects and programs to financing such as GCF/donors), data collection/monitoring, even SIDS preparing national indicators) etc

* sub regional and national SIDS Urban Agenda goals and indicators
What do we want to measure and why?

* good practices to learn from - evidence based island urban planning and management
Towards a SIDS Urban Agenda???? How would it Evolve?

* Moving towards “new” ways of understanding and doing ‘integrated’ SIDS urban planning and management also requires stakeholders to understand what urban management is - benefits

* What do the next implementation steps look like in SIDS to make the NUA and SDG 11 relevant at the local level????

* Can goals and indicators be set at the local and national levels to measure the ‘new urban success” ? ? What change does this require???? Fundamental questions.

* Requires a “coalition of the willing” and leadership at many levels: needs to be “everybody’s, not no-body’s” business !!