MOVING FROM *WHAT* TO *HOW* :
IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING
THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

A PRE-EVENT TO THE WUF9

Corus Hotel
6 February 2018

WHY THIS EVENT?

Over a year ago, the New Urban Agenda (NUA) was adopted at the Habitat III conference in Quito, with the objective to guide urbanization, lay the groundwork for policies and approaches, and lead actions of a wide range of actors — nation states, city and regional leaders, international development funders, United Nations programs and civil society — for the next 20 years. The NUA sought to move beyond issues of precarious housing and poor infrastructure that were prominent in the 1996 Habitat Agenda. Instead, it would draw attention to urban issues that affects cities all over the world, in low-income, middle-income, and high-income countries; issues including air pollution, energy efficient production and construction, public and private spaces, gender equality, and encompassing broader discussions such as the right to the city. The NUA was drafted under very different circumstances, it followed the euphoria of COP21 climate discussions in Paris, and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in the tail end of 2015. It was therefore perceived as the third axis within a New Global Agenda, one that "localizes" the SDGs and climate agreements, through the creation of a tool box of action items for countries and cities on how to achieve the global goals.

To the disappointment of many, the NUA did not provide such a tool box, concrete examples, actions, nor a greater discussion on how the SDGs could be translated into local actions. Instead it became a wish-list and description of utopian cities, where the economy grows and housing remains affordable, where a city becomes greener, has the power to control the real estate market, while achieving greater equality for all. What the NUA achieved was it brought international consensus of what an ideal city should be like and made countries commit to the ideals, however, how to fulfill such commitments remains unclear. Moreover, the Habitat III process highlighted the urgent lack of local data and the need for monitoring initiatives. Except for a series of parallel reports initiated by NGOs, such as the Habitat International Coalition, or the Habitat Commitment Index created by The New School, no comprehensive assessment of urban development and the fulfillment of Habitat commitments has taken place as part of the Habitat II and Habitat III process.

The WUF 9 pre-event *Moving from What to How. Implementing and Monitoring the New Urban Agenda* was set out to address these issues, by spurring a discussion of urban policies and practices that could serve as tools to implement the new global agendas and highlight efforts to monitor these commitments. The event was organized in three topics, one per panel, each with a set of questions:

Panel 1: Implementing the NUA in cities. What urban policies and practices have worked and what were the conditions for success? What kinds of processes led to the success of these policies and practices? Alternatively, which policies or practices were not so successful? Why, and what were the challenges they faced? What is the role of urban policy and policy-making in getting to the "how"?

Panel 2: Local capacity to accomplish the "*how*". Do city authorities/governments have enough capacity to shape their futures? If not, what are the ways that cities are gaining that capacity--politically and economically? What role do city networks or civil society organizations play in increasing capacity?

Panel 3: Monitoring the NUA and the role of local data. How should commitments and goals be monitored? Who should monitor? How can monitoring efforts go beyond assessment exercises but also increase accountability, and feed back into policy debates and discussions at the local level? Finally, how can alternative and innovative types of data complement government statistics?

More than 60 people from twenty-five organizations participated in the six-hour discussion. The event was organized in collaboration by the New School University, the City of Mannheim, Kota Kita, and the Global Parliament of Mayors, and was generously funded by the City of Mannheim.

This report aims to share the main takeaways of each panel, reflections, and action items to shape policy, research agendas, and organizing efforts. We would like to thank everyone who has attended the event for sharing their insights and comments which led to a rich discussion, the presenters for their invaluable contributions, and Kathy Kline for taking notes throughout the entire event.

OPENING REMARKS

Michael Cohen
THE NEW SCHOOL

Ahmad Rifai
KOTA KITA

Rainer Kern
MANNHEIM CITY

PANEL 1:
IMPLEMENTING THE NUA IN CITIES

PRESENTATIONS BY:

Kemal Taruc
KOTA KITA

Denison Jayasooria
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYSIA, INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC STUDIES

Sandra Valencia
MISTRA URBAN FUTURES

Violet Shivutse
HUAIROU COMMISSION

Lewis Dijkstra
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MODERATED BY:

Michael Cohen
THE NEW SCHOOL

PANEL 2:
LOCAL CAPACITY AND ACCOMPLISHING THE *HOW*

PRESENTATIONS BY:

Margarita Gutman
OBSERVATORY ON LATIN AMERICA, THE NEW SCHOOL

Carley Pennink
INSTITUTE FOR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Shariza Kamarudin
PENANG WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MODERATED BY:

Gulelat Kebede
FORMER UN-HABITAT THE NEW SCHOOL

PANEL 3:
MONITORING AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL DATA

PRESENTATIONS BY:

Lena Simet & David López García
THE GLOBAL URBAN FUTURES PROJECT THE NEW SCHOOL

Christian Hübel
DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE, CITY OF MANNHEIM

MODERATED BY:

Paulista Surjadi
KOTA KITA

CLOSING REMARKS

Guenter Meinert
GIZ

Kaori Ota Cabrera
KOTA KITA

Michael Cohen
THE NEW SCHOOL

IMPLEMENTING THE NUA IN CITIES

The first panel was set to discuss policies, cases, and practices that could serve as positive, or negative case studies for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The panel was composed of representatives from Kota Kita, the University of Malaysia, Mistra Urban Futures, the Huairou Commission, and the European Commission.

Michael Cohen, who moderated this session, opened the panel stressing the inter-relationship embedded in Agenda 2030 and the need to doing business differently than in the past. He further emphasized the lack of monitoring commitments of past agendas. For example, do you know what countries fulfilled the commitments made in the 1996 Habitat Agenda? What about the MDGs? What countries are on track of meeting SDG targets? And, how's your country doing? The Global Urban Futures Project at The New School addressed this lack of monitoring by creating the Habitat Commitment Index (HCI) in preparation for the Habitat III conference. Findings of the HCI are presented in the Panel 3 section of this report.

Left to right: Kemal Taruc, Sandra Valencia, Lewis Dijkstra, Denison Jayasooria, Violet Shivutse.

In the Malaysian context, a rapidly urbanizing country, the NUA has tremendous potential and relevance. **Denison Jayasooria** from the University of Malaysia's Institute of Ethnic Studies cited the 11th Malaysian plan as a positive example for the implementation of the NUA, as it addressed multidimensional poverty and Agenda 21 gender budgeting as part of federal housing initiatives. However, Denison highlighted major challenges in implementing the NUA in Malaysia. The shrinking of democratic space and restrictions to basic fundamental liberties - especially for the bottom 40% - is among the largest obstacles and directly contrasts SDG 16.6 and 16.7 on participatory responsive involvement. As an example, Mayors continue to be appointed from top civil service and are not elected, which diminishes the level of accountability towards city residents.

In Indonesia, the implementation of the NUA is likely to be limited, at best. **Kemal Taruc**, formerly UN-Habitat and currently with Kota Kita, assessed Indonesia's national urban policy and formal urban institutions. He finds that institutions continue to operate in silos, only paying attention to specific urban activities, without having the larger vision in mind. In addition, the majority of Indonesia's residents and employment activities continue to be undocumented and are not acknowledged by official institutions. Without a better understanding of who lives in cities, and more collaboration between residents and implementing agencies, the NUA is unlikely to result in the paradigm shift needed to create more inclusive cities for all.
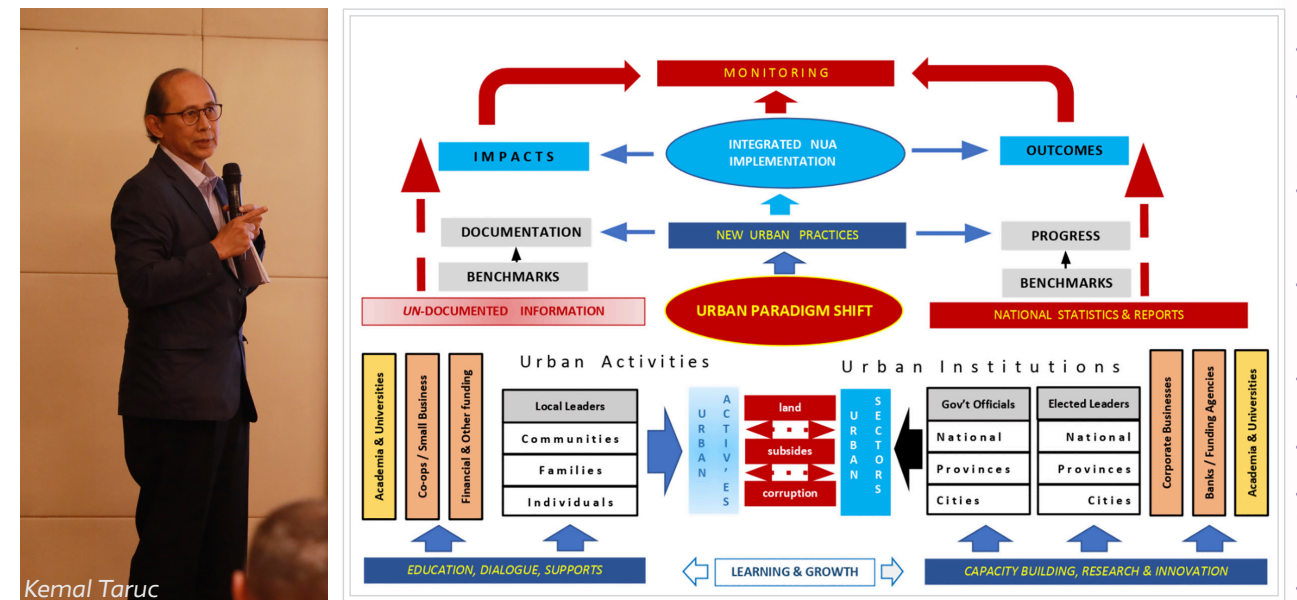
Kemal Taruc

These challenges are however not unique to Asia, but also appear in India, Sweden, the UK, and Argentina. A research project by Mistra Urban Futures, presented by **Sandra Valencia**, looks at how cities are engaging with and adopting the NUA. With one researcher in each of the participating cities - Buenos Aires, Kisumu, Gothenburg, Cape Town, Sheffield, and Shimla - the objective is to co-produce knowledge together with city authorities, and to encourage cross-city learning.

Overall, Mistra's study finds that there is very little knowledge about the NUA in the local governments of the six cities, a state that Sandra refers to as *"Non-Implementation of the NUA"*. Governments that are aware of the NUA, claim that limited local capacity and the lack of national government support are major obstacles for implementation. When asked about strategies to overcome current challenges, local governments stressed the need for stronger partnerships between the local and the national level. Cape Town in particular highlighted the need of embedding SDGs and the NUA in ongoing city strategies. Identifying programs with mandates that go beyond regular political cycles can be very effective too. In all cases, greater involvement of citizens was perceived as absolutely necessary for a successful implementation of the NUA.

Sandra Valencia

Non-Implementation of the NUA

- Little to no implementation
- Limited national guidance
- Day to day operations – limited capacity
- Institutional silos
- Other agendas underway
- National urban policies in progress
  But city governments not involved or aware

sandra.valencia@chalmers.se

URBAN FUTURES

The role that citizens and especially grassroots women play in the implementation of the NUA, was reinforced by **Violet Shivutse**, the recently elected chair of the Huairou Commission. Violet's main concern about international agendas is the disconnect between those drafting agendas, and those living the results. Although grassroots women are beneficiaries of "Global Goals" and targets of development, they are often excluded in the planning. To ensure that the same doesn't happen in the implementation of SDG targets and the NUA, communities and organizations such as Huairou are pushing to formalize channels for community input in the design of action items. "Local officials come and go, but we are here to stay." The same holds true for monitoring. "Those responsible for action shouldn't be the ones in charge of monitoring, at least not without the involvement of others, especially the community."

Thinking about monitoring city performance, especially in times of growing and expanding cities, raises the immediate question of:
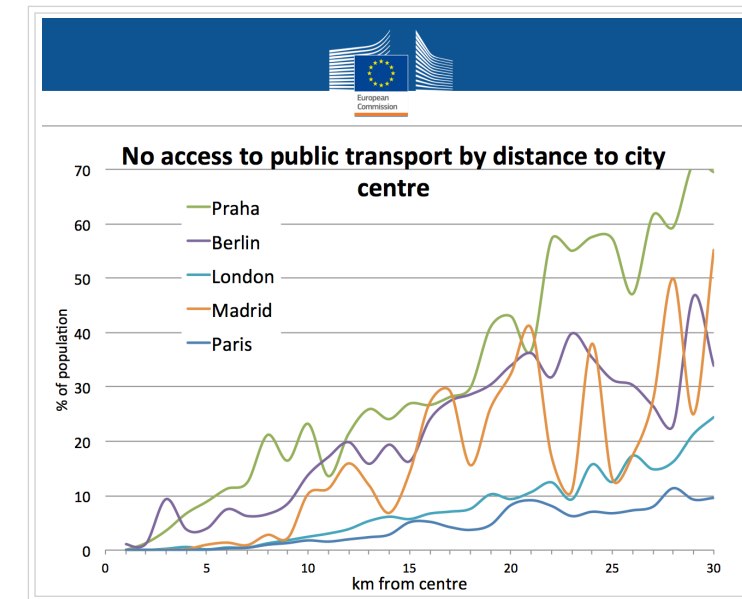

Lewis Dijkstra

Where does your city stop?

Lewis Dijkstra, Head of the Economic Analysis Sector at the European Commission, addressed the question of city boundaries. In his research, instead of using the administrative boundaries of cities, his research unit calculates functional urban areas to define urban economies, population numbers, and city boundaries. He also stressed the need for future intra-city analyses.

"Measurements of open space, air pollution, or access to transport is drastically different depending on whether it's being measured in the city center, or at the edge of a city." Access to public transport, for example, decreases significantly the farther the distance from the city center, see figure below. In Prague, 70% of the population living only 30km from the city center have no access to public transport. Agreeing on the same unit of measurement and definition of cities is particularly relevant when comparing the performance of cities across countries.

No access to public transport by distance to city centre

Legend: Praha, Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris

y-axis: % of population (0–70)
x-axis: km from centre (0–30)

TAKEAWAYS FROM PANEL 1

The panel identified the following challenges as major obstacles in the implementation of the NUA:

- Limited national guidance on how to translate this agenda into action
- Limited local capacity to implement
- Institutional silos - which go against the intersectoral approach of the SDGs
- Disagreement about where the city starts and ends

- The NUA is not straightforward, vagueness leaves room for interpretation
- Lack of concrete implementation and monitoring framework
- Cities are already engaged in other agendas (e.g. Rockefeller's Resilient City Program)
- Cities governments are not included in the development of national urban policies

Strategies to overcome these obstacles:
- Involvement of community and grassroots organizations
- Need for an updated definition of city boundaries and responsibilities
- Importance of democracy
- Tools to increase accountability - e.g. through monitoring
- Greater collaboration between national and local governments

LOCAL CAPACITY TO ACCOMPLISH THE "*HOW*".

The second panel of the day was all about the "*how*." How can the NUA be implemented by local governments? Do city authorities and local governments have enough capacity to shape their futures? What are the ways that cities are gaining political and economic strengths? What role do city networks or civil society organizations play in increasing capacity? Representatives from the Observatory on Latin America, the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, and the Penang Women's Development Corporation presented on these issues. The session was moderated by **Gulelat Kebede**, formerly UN-Habitat, and currently an Adjunct Professor at The New School.

To situate the need for local capacity for the implementation of the NUA, Gulelat Kebede raised three major items that the NUA is calling for:

1. Leave no one behind - create fair and inclusive societies, and remove barriers for social inclusion
2. Be truly transformational - business as usual cannot be a solution
3. Integrate the NUA within the SDGs. Bringing urban into the SDGs, taking urban complexity to a new level (and beyond SDG 11).

In order to read these aims, the following capacities are needed:
1. Intra-urban thinking
2. Accountability, transparency, and long term commitment
3. Knowledge and better urban data

Margarita Gutman, New School Professor and Director of the Observatory on Latin America, reflected on the question of local capacity in the context of Buenos Aires. In a comparative analysis of urban plans of municipalities in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, her research team found the following:

- the existence of an urban plan does not determine the quality and implementation of urban public policy
- more elaborate plans do not correlate with better planning results innovation was mostly developed by some municipalities that decided not to elaborate a plan.

These findings question the necessity and effectiveness of some of the urban plans as prospective and legislative instruments for the successful implementation of urban public policies at the local level. These findings have important implications for the implementation of the NUA, because municipalities within the same provincial jurisdiction have very **different responses** to the legal requirements for urban planning. Also, the formulation of a plan does **not guarantee** the implementation of urban policies. Lastly, institutional capacity to formulate objectives and to achieve them should be a combination of different political and technical logics which respond to local social needs and demands.

Margarita Gutman

Google Street View > proxy to the formal city
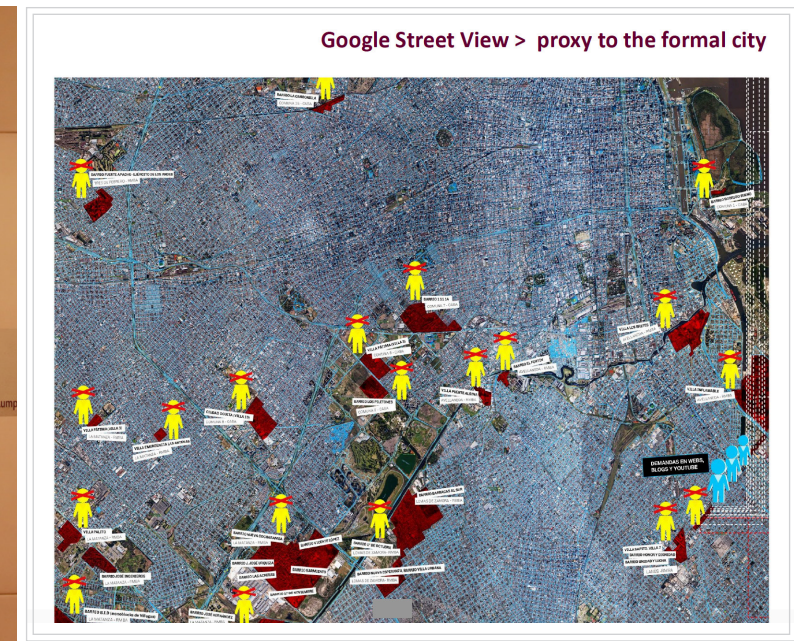
As part of another project that Professor Gutman is directing, researchers study the benefits and limitations of technology in presenting the needs of citizens and the city overall. Working with Google Maps Street View, the project finds an "urban digital divide" between places visible on Google Maps and those that are not. "You will never know what is really happening in the bad parts of the city. Google Street View is crucial because it is a proxy to the formal city." These findings are important, because urban professionals increasingly rely on metrics and measurements to define municipal priorities. Implementing the NUA in the light of the vision to "leave no one behind," needs to be aware of this digital blindness.
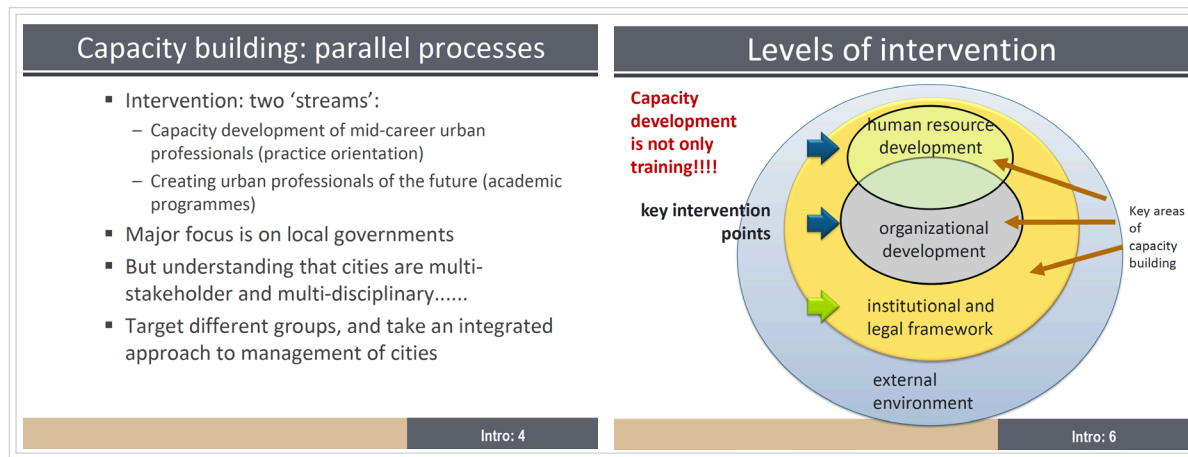
Left to right: Shariza Kamarudin, Carley Pennink, Margarita Gutman, Gulelat Kebede

The Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) has been involved with post graduate training of professionals for over 10 years, and are increasingly looking at how urban practice can be shaped and influenced through capacity building. **Carley Pennink** from the IHS shared her experiences in training professionals and reflects on what is necessary to increase local capacity - both politically and also economically. At the moment, city authorities do not have sufficient capacities to shape their futures. In order to change that, the IHS developed a City Development Strategy 2.0 Toolkit. Here, training urban professionals is key, however more is needed to increase capacity. First, one needs to understand the issues of a given city. Second, sustained and long-term funding is important, especially in situations where local governments are at the mercy of national transfers.

Carley Pennink

Capacity building: parallel processes

- Intervention: two 'streams':
  - Capacity development of mid-career urban professionals (practice orientation)
  - Creating urban professionals of the future (academic programmes)
- Major focus is on local governments
- But understanding that cities are multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary......
- Target different groups, and take an integrated approach to management of cities

Intro: 4

Levels of intervention

Capacity development is not only training!!!!

key intervention points

- human resource development
- organizational development
- institutional and legal framework
- external environment

Key areas of capacity building

Intro: 6

Building greater and sustained capacity can, and perhaps should, also come from the citizens themselves. **Shariza Kamarudin**, from the Women's Development Corporation (WDC) in Penang, presented how her organization created local capacity in regards to gender mainstreaming. First, local council representatives were invited and actively engaged in gender responsive budgeting workshops. Results of the workshops were distributed online and shared with the city council. As part of this, community needs that most urgently require funding were presented. Aside from this initiative, the WDC trains local leaders to communicate more effectively with the government. "By working with, and not against the local government, we can shape and transform local institutions and give them more strength, capacity, and a feeling of accountability towards their citizens." Although projects as Shariza's may seem small, they have the capacity to scale up and gain great influence. In the case of gender responsive budgeting, just this year, the national decided to launch a policy on gender participatory budgeting in response to Penang's initiatives.

TAKEAWAYS FROM PANEL 2

The panel identified the following obstacles in creating local capacity:

- Institutional paralysis - politics of decentralization that limit local capacity and initiative
- Short term partnerships and interventions that don't go beyond the political cycle
- Corruption
- Interventions of organizations from "outside" without local inclusion
- Limitations of technology and smart city initiatives
- The existence of urban plans does not guarantee quality implementation

Potential strategies to overcome these obstacles:

- A NUA needs a new urban practice. We can't do business as usual, which means we need to rethink the way we train urban professionals
- Capacity building should be inclusive, involving citizens and community organizations
- Internationally acting organizations and consultants need to ensure that it is local government that implements
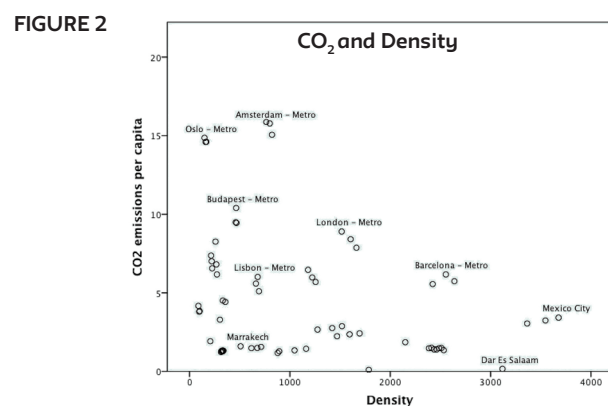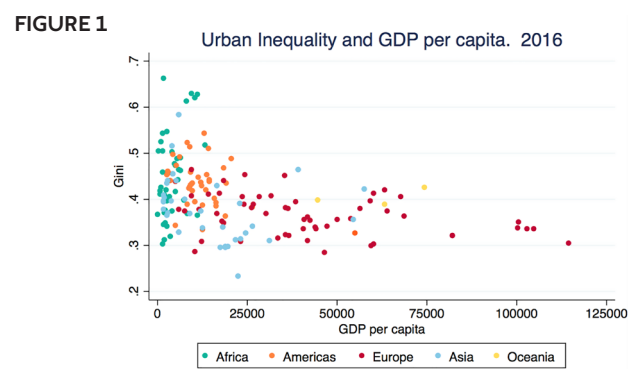- Ensure long term funding

Clockwise: Audience introductions, Ahmad Rifai, Paulista Surjadi, questions from audience

MONITORING AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL DATA.

The third and last panel of the day was dedicated to the topic of monitoring and city level data. How global agendas like the NUA and the SDGs can be monitored at the city level, who should monitor, and whether the necessary data exists, were some of the questions raised and addressed throughout the panel.

Lena Simet and **David López García**, PhD Candidates at the New School, presented findings of the Habitat Commitment Index (HCI), an on-going research project at the New School that assesses the fulfillment of commitments made at the 1996 Habitat Agenda, and more recently in the NUA and the SDGs. The first part of the HCI study found that the majority of countries did not follow through on the promises they made 20 years ago at Habitat II. The HCI 2.0, which assesses performance in 178 cities, highlights the challenges for city level assessments. Most importantly, as of today there is no comprehensive historical global database for cities. City level data is collected sporadically, with different methodologies across countries and regions, and very rarely presented in a harmonized and continuous fashion. From the 47 indicators included in the HCI, only 4 complied with the requirements of the HCI methodology. Hence, at the current state of data availability, the NUA and the SDGs cannot be monitored at the city level.

Despite the challenge of drawing conclusions about urban performance, the HCI 2.0 presents insights in specific topics, such as trends in intra-urban inequality across regions, or the relationship between population density and CO2 Emissions. As is depicted in Figure 1, of 178 cities included in the study, African cities have the highest levels of inequality. Also, no city with a GDP per capita higher than $25,000, had a Gini Coefficient that exceeded 0.5. Figure 2 shows that cities with higher density had lower CO2 Emissions. In addition, our findings question the notion that density leads to improved employment.

Lena Simet

David López García

FIGURE 1

Urban Inequality and GDP per capita. 2016

• Africa   • Americas   • Europe   • Asia   • Oceania

FIGURE 2

CO_2 and Density

Despite the unsatisfying availability of city data, there are countries and cities that are collecting quality information and that have engaged in monitoring initiatives that serve as sources of inspiration. Mannheim, a city in Germany, serves as a poster-child for local monitoring. **Christian Hübel** from the Department of Strategic Governance, presented Mannheim's initiative in monitoring its performance in 200 global targets using about 400 indicators. This initiative was unique in two ways. First, it served as a catalyst in breaking down silos of planners, educators, and practitioners because every department was involved in the monitoring system. This led to the realization that all actions and policies are highly interdependent and connected. Second, the monitoring initiative includes an assessment of Mannheim's actions abroad. This includes, for example, an analysis of local water consumption and waste management and the effects on the environment in other countries. This initiative raised awareness of the global effects of local actions, creating a feeling of responsibility and global citizenship.

Christian Hübel

ROLE MODEL "MANNHEIM 2030" AND AGENDA 2030

TAKEAWAYS FROM PANEL 3

The panel identified the following obstacles in monitoring city performance:

- Methodologies for local data collection differ greatly across countries, data is therefore not comparable
- Political resistance in monitoring performance out of fear for poor results
- Political resistance in collecting certain information
- Missing mechanisms of accountability, locally and nationally
- Lack of a harmonized global city database

Potential strategies to overcome these obstacles:

- Greater commitment in collecting city data
- International guidance and assistance on local data collection and analysis
- Creating a feeling of global citizenship that tracks global effects of local actions
- Make data (at all levels) openly available
- Involve other actors in data gathering and analysis

LESSONS LEARNED

In the closing remarks, **Guenter Meinert** from GIZ, **Kaori Ota Cabrera** from Kota Kita, and **Michael Cohen** from The New School reflected on the discussions of the day. Of those, the following five lessons stand out as particularly relevant for future conversations, for policy considerations, and for research agendas.

1.   We need to re-define the concept of urban. Where does the city end, and where do administrative responsibilities begin? Where do agendas apply, and what do agendas even refer to?

2.   UN documents and discussions remain silent on institutional and local capacity. The importance of institutional processes needs to be studied further. What does city capacity mean, and how can it be measured?

3.   Monitoring and evaluation is not only a data issue. Politicians must listen and be held accountable for inaction. An international follow up and review process of SDGs and NUA is necessary to maintain political interest.

4.   City governments shouldn't be overloaded. An integrative approach, combining various agendas (global, regional, and national), is therefore urgently needed.

5.   The concept of global citizenship should be supported further, as we need to jointly care for our cities, our environment, and our planet. The indicators that Mannheim uses to assess the effects of local actions on other countries can serve as an interesting example.

These lessons are particularly relevant as we are entering a new historical moment. In 2018, for the first time, the G-20 countries will hold a meeting reflecting on the importance of cities for heads of states and national economies. This raises the stake - what issues should be raised at the higher political level? What is needed?

Michael Cohen closed the conference with a Swahili saying: "*those who arrived, have a long way to go.*" We hope you can join us on the way that lies ahead!

*Left to right:
Guenter Meinert,
Kaori Ota Cabrera,
& Michael Cohen*