INTRODUCTION TO THE CONGRESS
## by the General Rapporteur Shipra Narang Suri, India

Urban planner, international urban consultant, New Delhi, India

It is now widely accepted that the ongoing urbanisation process is unstoppable, irreversible, and is taking place largely in the developing world. Since 2008, half of the world's population, or 3.3 billion people, live in urban areas. This number is expected to rise to 5 billion by 2030[1], and 80 per cent of these urban dwellers will live in towns and cities of the developing world.

The pattern of urbanisation, of course, is not uniform across the globe. Different regions of the world demonstrate different urbanisation levels and growth rates. The fastest urbanizing region of the world - Africa, with an urban growth rate of 3.3 per cent per annum between 2000-2005 - is currently the least urbanized. This highlights the attraction of people to cities in regions where rural poverty is widespread, and cities represent hope and opportunity. Africa is followed by Asia, which is growing at 2.6 per cent per annum. In both these regions, the urban population was currently just under 40 per cent of the total in 2005. The regional distribution of total urban population in 2005 and 2050 (projected) is shown in Figure 1. In terms of sheer numbers, Asia currently does and will continue to house the maximum number of people in its cities and towns. Africa, though currently lagging behind other regions in terms of numbers, will be home to a staggering 1.2 billion urban dwellers by 2050. A comparison of the urban growth rates in various sub-regions of Asia and Africa is illustrated below.

In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly 77 per cent people lived in urban areas in 2005, and this region is growing on an average at 1.7 per cent per annum. Developed countries are growing at a much slower pace, at an average rate of 0.75 per cent per annum.

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[1] UN-HABITAT (2006b). State of the World's Cities 2006/7: The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Sustainability: 30 Years of Shaping the Habitat Agenda. London, Sterling, Earthscan for UN-HABITAT.
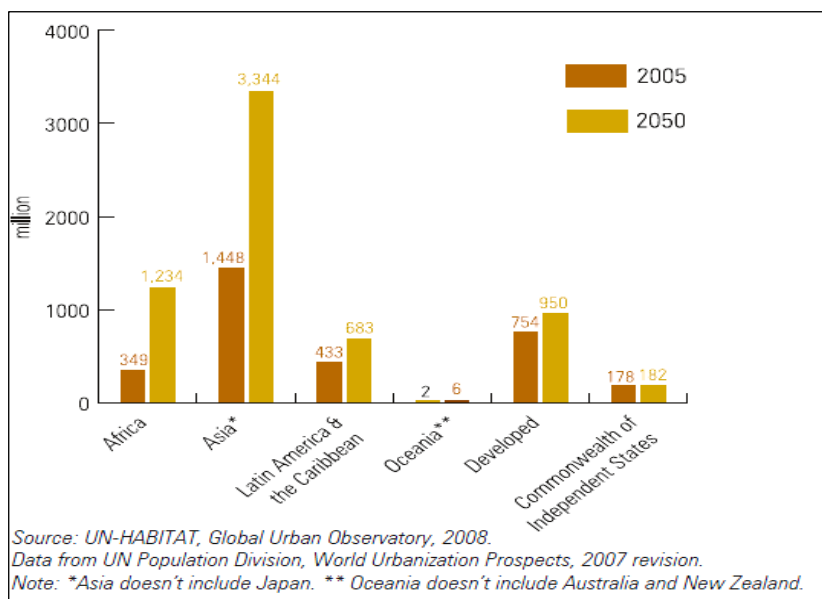
Total urban population of different regions, 2005 and 2050

(Source: UN-HABITAT 2008)

Region	Annual urban growth rate (per cent, 2005 data)
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.58
South-Eastern Asia	3.82
Eastern Asia	3.39
Southern Asia	2.89
Northern Africa	2.48

Annual urban growth rates, Asia and Africa

(Source: UN-HABITAT 2006b)

Sustainable urbanisation in the developing world

Sustainable urbanisation is defined by UN-HABITAT as:

> *"… a dynamic, multi-dimensional process covering environmental as well as social, economic and political-institutional sustainability. It embraces relationships between all human settlements, from small urban centres to metropolises, and between towns and cities and their surrounding rural areas."* [2]

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[2] UN-HABITAT (2002b). Sustainable Urbanisation: Achieving Agenda 21. Nairobi, UN-HABITAT.

In other words, in a sustainable city or town, urban growth and development is managed in such a way that it is environmentally sound, economically efficient and socially just, equitable and inclusive. This is also closely linked to good urban governance, which has come to be defined not just by the quality or level of public service delivery, but by the effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness of the local administration; the level of stakeholder participation and inclusion in public policy and decision-making procedures; and the degree of transparency and accountability in these processes[3].

Cities are not just defined by concentrations of people. They are also hubs of trade and industry, and physical, financial and human resources are concentrated within them. According to UN-HABITAT, in developed countries, cities generate over 80 per cent of national economic output, while in developing countries, urban economic activity contributes significantly to national revenue, generating up to 40 per cent of gross domestic product[4]. Furthermore, cities also have more organised forms of local government, which is often (but not always) better-equipped and resourced, and more effective, than rural administrations. Thus, urbanisation *per se* is not an entirely negative phenomenon. Cities and towns are places of opportunity and innovation, present the potential of a better quality of life to a large proportion of their citizens, and offer a wealth of ideas and alternatives for achieving sustainability, equity and poverty reduction. According to the UNFPA, urban concentrations can in fact *"…offer better chances for long-term sustainability, starting with the fact that [it] concentrate[s] half the Earth's population on less than 3 per cent of its land area […] the dispersion of population and economic activities would likely make the problems worse rather than better"[5]*.

It is also being acknowledged by most international organizations and national governments that significant progress can be made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by focusing on urban areas. *"Sustainable development needs sustainable cities. The most critical stakeholders in delivering progress on the Millennium Development Goals are cities, especially those in developing countries"[6]*.

Similarly, as cities contribute to, as well as bear the brunt of, climate change to a significant extent, they also provide a real opportunity to mitigate and reverse the impact of global climate change.

> *"It is no coincidence that climate change has emerged at the forefront of international debate precisely at the same time as the world becomes predominantly urban. This is because urbanisation brings about irreversible changes in our production and consumption patterns. How we plan, manage and live in our expanding cities determines, to a large extent, the pace of global warming"* (Anna Tibaijuka, quoted in UN-HABITAT 2009: 8).

Indeed, for towns and cities to fulfil their potential and offer inclusive and sustainable development, protection from and resilience to disaster, to all those who live and work therein, the process of urbanisation needs to be planned and managed more effectively.

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[3] Narang, S., A. Wilde, et al. (2009). A Users' Guide to Measuring Local Governance. Oslo, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre.
[4] UN-HABITAT (2006b). State of the World's Cities 2006/7: The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Sustainability: 30 Years of Shaping the Habitat Agenda. London, Sterling, Earthscan for UN-HABITAT.
[5] UNFPA (2007). State of the world population 2007: Unleashing the potential of urban growth, United Nations Population Fund.
[6] Hoornweg, D. and P. Bhada (2009). "Why sustainable cities hold the key to climate change." Urban World **1** (2): 24-25.

Nowhere is this more critical than in small and medium-sized towns of the global South, which have little capacity and limited resources to manage rapid urban growth. More than 53 per cent of the world's urban population lives in cities of fewer than 500,000 inhabitants, and another 22 per cent of the global urban population lives in cities of 1 to 5 million inhabitants[7]. Nearly 85 per cent of the urban population in Africa and Asia is concentrated in cities with less than 5 million inhabitants. It is only in Latin America and the Caribbean that the share of mega-cities and large cities rises to nearly 20 per cent. In terms of growth rates as well, cities with under 5 million inhabitants demonstrated the highest annual growth between 1990-2000 in Africa as compared to similar-sized cities in all other parts of the world, with small cities (between 100,000 – 500,000 population) growing at a rate above 4 per cent, and intermediate and big cities at around 3 per cent[8].

While they are growing at the fastest rates globally, small and medium-sized cities of the developing world are also the least-equipped to deal with the problems of urbanisation and pursue a sustainable development pattern. They often have extremely low capacities in terms of human and financial resources, limited investment in infrastructure (e.g. water and drainage), weaker urban management and planning capability, are least prepared for disasters, and yet, these same cities attract less investment and donor interest.

Sustainable cities in the developing world, therefore, will hold the key to sustainable development of our planet.

The Nairobi Congress

Whether they rely on old-fashioned master plans or more evolved approaches such as strategic planning, strategic spatial planning, city development strategies, etc., sustainability is increasingly becoming a core area of focus for urban planners, managers and anyone who is involved in setting or implementing urban policies and projects. The subject of the Nairobi Congress, therefore – Sustainable City/ Developing World – is timely and well-chosen. This is also illustrated by the interest shown by members in the Congress – 192 abstracts were received, of which 115 were selected for full paper submission. Finally, 92 papers were received, whose geographical distribution fully reflects the theme of the Congress – 27 papers are from Africa, 26 from Asia, and 11 from South America, representing the global South, whereas 13 papers have been received from Europe, 8 from North America and 3 from Australia.

Planning strategies for sustainable development in cities of the developing world will be discussed during the Congress according to the type of intervention through which they can be best addressed, for example, **urban policy and financing, urban form and design, urban planning instruments, and urban governance.** The four workshops will be structured along these sub-themes and are briefly introduced below. A detailed discussion on each workshop is presented by each Rapporteur after this Introduction.

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[7] UN-HABITAT (2006b). State of the World's Cities 2006/7: The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Sustainability: 30 Years of Shaping the Habitat Agenda. London, Sterling, Earthscan for UN-HABITAT.
[8] UN-HABITAT (2008). State of the World's Cities 2008/2009: Harmonious Cities. London, Sterling, Earthscan for UN-HABITAT.

WORKSHOP 1: Effective policy-making and financing for sustainable urbanisation

Urban policy formulation encompasses not just spatial planning but also issues such as housing and service delivery; economic development, infrastructure and privatisation; environmental and natural resource management; and, social inclusion. Furthermore, policy-making for sustainable urbanisation is not restricted to the urban level alone. National and provincial urbanisation and economic policies, regional development priorities, and strategies to combat climate change, among others, impact significantly on urbanisation and urban development patterns. While urban local governments are powerful actors in many developed countries, in the global South they are often weak and face a battery of constraints, including those of technical knowledge, human and financial resources. There are examples, however, of innovative municipal finance mechanisms and public-private partnerships in the area of infrastructure development and service delivery. How can all these policies and financing arrangements be harnessed to build sustainable cities?

A total of 22 papers will be presented in this workshop. These examine environmental, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of urban development, and the impact of a wide range of policies in these realms on sustainable urbanisation. A few papers also address cross-cutting development policies rather than any single element of the sustainable development equation.

WORKSHOP 2: The impact of spatial planning, urban design and built form on urban sustainability

Spatial planning is undoubtedly the main preoccupation of a majority of planning professionals, including the members of ISOCARP. Indeed, spatial planning and urban design have far-reaching implications for sustainable urbanisation, whether in terms of mitigating spatial fragmentation, avoiding gentrification and social exclusion; supporting environmentally sensitive development, protection of fragile urban lands and eco-systems; or, promoting a built environment which is resilient to the increasingly frequent and intense natural/ man-made disasters. Inner city regeneration, improvements in built form and the quality of open spaces, using design to reduce vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters, and to support integration while at the same time encouraging diversity – all these are strategies than can have a significant positive impact on urban sustainability.

The 24 papers presented in this workshop will focus predominantly on the role of spatial planning and urban design in three areas – developing eco-efficient and green cities; reducing vulnerability to, and mitigating the impact of, disasters; and promoting social diversity, equity and inclusion.

WORKSHOP 3: Urban planning instruments for sustainability

In most developing countries, as well as a large number of transitional and developed nations, urban planning continues to rely on instruments such as master plans which specify in some detail land use, provide for segregation of uses through zoning regulations, and impose (usually rigid) building bye-laws and standards. Although innovative planning approaches are also coming to the fore, and these instruments are also being reformed, yet,

there is a long way to go before entire planning systems can be transformed from being control-oriented to supportive of contextually-relevant forms of development. For instance, the predominance of informal housing and economic activity in many developing country cities is illustrative of the contradiction between reality and the ideal urban scenario envisioned by colonial-era legislation. Often, such laws and planning instruments can serve to further exacerbate socio-spatial divisions within cities, sometimes even resulting in violent social unrest (e.g. in Zimbabwe).

The role of urban planning instruments such as master plans, zoning regulations and building codes in promoting (or, conversely, undermining) social, economic and environmental sustainability, is the overarching question addressed by the 27 papers in this workshop. The relationship between planners' "tools" and their "ideas", is another interesting dimension explored by some authors.

WORKSHOP 4: Improving governance for sustainable urban development

Urban planning is a key instrument of urban governance, especially in cities of the developing world which have long-standing planning traditions (economic or spatial). Conversely, improvements in the overall quality of governance, assessed on the basis of principles such as participation and civic engagement, transparency and accountability, subsidiarity and rule of law, among others, can also help in improving the decision-making processes in cities and making development responsive to the needs of the people. Improved urban planning processes, procedures and regulations; increased and widespread participation, the reform of planning education, are all important connections between planning and governance, which have a bearing on sustainable urbanisation.

The 20 papers in this workshop focus on how inclusive or exclusive urban planning processes are, and how they can be made more open and equitable, especially ensuring that voices of marginalised stakeholders are heard. More specifically, the papers deal with both principles and tools to assess and compare the quality of planning and governance processes, as well as innovations and best practices.

In conclusion…

This Congress – the first to be held in Sub-Saharan Africa – offers a rich canvas of case studies, a majority of which are from the developing world. This is an important development for ISOCARP, with the potential to guide its future agenda, as well as expand its reach to planners from the global South. The partnership with UN-HABITAT, the engagement of a range of corporate partners, and the participation of sister networks such as IFHP, present important possibilities for future collaboration. I'm sure that the Nairobi Congress will be a resounding success, and will yield truly innovative ideas and strategies to make cities sustainable across the world, not only, but most especially, in the developing world. Welcome to Nairobi.