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***CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE: STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND TRADE-  
OFFS***

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## *Introduction*

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of ISOCARP, I would like to start by thanking the organisers for the opportunity of addressing you today. UN-HABITAT sees this conference as an important step on the road to restoring planning to a position of rightful visibility in the debates about how to tackle one of the two major issues facing our world today. One issue is climate change, the other as I will argue below, is poverty. As I hope will become clear, these matters are interlinked.

I want to give you a view today on how planning can play its part in developing a global strategy to address these issues. But no strategy is pure. There need to be tactics to implement it as the world is complicated, and these tactics often lead to trade-offs being made as messy realities intercede. I have been asked by the organizers to concentrate on planning in the developing world. However, I would like to start with some observations on where planning is now in terms of a global perspective and the challenges to be addressed as it faces up to climate change.

## *UN-HABITAT's Perspective on Planning*

I am particularly pleased that I have this opportunity to address you because UN-HABITAT, which is the world's lightning conductor for views on all urban issues, is an agency that has changed its view on planning. For many years UN-HABITAT lost faith in planning as a viable approach. Its failure to live up to the promise implicit in its philosophy and history had disillusioned us.

What we failed to fully appreciate was that many of the new approaches that we had been exploring as alternatives to planning under the banner of good governance that reigned supreme at that time - such as city consultations as practiced by our Urban Management Programme and the Sustainable Cities Programme, City Development Strategies pioneered by the Cities Alliance and Rapid Urban Sector Profiles - were in fact new iterations in planning, but by other names. This realization started dawning in UN-HABITAT around 2002 with the events we staged on the future of urban planning at the World Urban Forum in Barcelona. The momentum has been growing in pace since then, with the paper on *Reinventing Planning* that was agreed at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver in 2006 being a particularly important milestone.

This has been further reinforced by this year's celebration of the role of planning at the high profile World Habitat Day held in Washington DC earlier this month. It is also reflected in the publication of the *Global Report on Human Settlements* focusing on planning, on which we will be able to dwell a bit more tomorrow at the special event.

## *Reinventing Planning*

Perhaps the process of the revival of planning would have taken place anyway without UN-HABITAT, although we like to believe we have played our part, and are happy to join forces with entities such as ISOCARP in pursuing further evolution. We believe planning to be in much better shape than it has been for many years to move to centre-stage. It is much more credible in the eyes of the world. This is not because of showcasing of achievement, nor through self-congratulation, but because planning has moved on from soul searching and self-flagellation to a process of reinventing itself. This can clearly be seen from this conference's agenda, on which the organizers are to be congratulated.

## *A Global Vision for Planning*

Confronting climate change by embracing sustainable development has been critical in creating a more viable vision for planning. There can be no sustainable development without sustainable

urban development. Planning is critical in achieving this. My argument is that if planning is to be successful in helping to achieve urban development, it needs to continue to lift its gaze from a focus mainly on the local and make the link to global issues. Planning also has to persist in modernising to be fit for purpose. Great strides have already been made, but more is needed.

### *Planning and Climate Change*

The case for tackling climate change is incontrovertible. As eloquently expressed in the message from your President, the science is clear about the build up of greenhouse gases and the warming of the climate system. The impacts are known - rising sea levels threatening many cities, extreme weather patterns destroying lives and property – I will not rehearse them further here. We have a 10 year window in which to act.

What are the implications for planning? I would like to examine the case the case for making climate change a key planning consideration.

### *The Role of Cities in Causing Climate Change*

It is in cities that planning has its greatest impact. But in strategizing about planning's role we have to examine the role of cities in both in creating and combating climate change. The most credible information comes from the International Energy Agency, more specifically its *World Energy Outlook 2008*. It states "The bulk of the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is expected to come from cities, their share rising from 71% in 2006 to 76% in 2030 as a result of urbanization." (Executive Summary, p12).

However, carbon dioxide is only part of the broader greenhouse gas emission (GHG) picture. I would refer here to the IPCC 2007 *Fourth Assessment report: Summary for Policy Makers* - which states (page 5) that in 2004, CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuel uses took a share of 56.6% of total anthropogenic GHG emissions. Other major shares include CO<sub>2</sub> from deforestation and decay of biomass (17.3%), and methane from agriculture, waste and energy (14.3%). Parts of the latter could be allocated to cities as well, for example, landfill methane, but let us set aside these complications for the sake of clarity.

By doing the mathematics we can deduce that 40% of global anthropogenic GHG emanate from cities. It should be noted that this is less than the over 50% of the world's population that UN-HABITAT calculates now lives in cities. These calculations are of course larded with heroic assumptions and methodological pitfalls that have to be resolved, for example, the question of production versus consumption - should power generation, commuter transport, heavy industry, airline travel etc. be allocated to cities? We will disregard these complexities as well.

What are the conclusions should we draw from these figures? CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in cities are often lower than country averages. Does that mean that cities are not really part of the problem? UN-HABITAT believes that cities emit such a significant share of GHG emissions that they have to be part of the solution and that there is significant potential for reduction.

### *Implications for Cities in Developed Countries*

An important detail needs to be mentioned. It is incontrovertible that the cities of the economically developed world have historically contributed and still contribute the lions's share of GHG emissions. It is clear that inefficient city development in the North, based on exploitation of fossil fuels, particularly for car-based transportation is a suitable case for planning treatment. A strategy of planning for compact cities is an obvious solution in developed countries.

Other measures that need to be routinely contemplated in the cities of the developed North are congestion charging, incentives for greener buildings, premiums on residential locations requiring higher automobile dependence, incorporating carbon pricing in land taxes, etc. Such broader, high impact efforts require a more comprehensive political and cultural momentum to overcome entrenched lifestyle preferences that significantly contribute to climate change. Developed world cities will need to focus on bringing the public on board. Such strategic interventions need to go beyond legislation against plastic bags and disposable cups.

### *Adaptation to Climate Change*

I would now like to look at another side of the issue, concentrating on the role of cities in developing countries and the role of adaptation rather than mitigation.

Climate change is an important driver in city vulnerability since it exacerbates current threats. Climate induced impacts are expected to increase the frequency and severity of disasters in cities. This would be the case for cities such as Dhaka, Hanoi and Jakarta .

Four out of ten non-permanent houses in the developing world - which are mainly found in cities - are located in areas threatened by rising sea levels, floods, landslides and other natural disasters that are caused to climate change. An obvious role for spatial planning is to reduce this risk by ensuring that slums and other low income housing development is out of harm's way.

An oft-heard argument about planning strategy, derived from the juxtaposition of the role of cities North and South, put crudely, is that planning in the developed world should concentrate on mitigation and the developing world on adaptation.

### *Developing Countries' Position*

Developing countries have shaped a strategic negotiating position for climate change negotiations that reflects this argument to a significant degree. It runs as follows: as developed countries are in the main responsible for the problem of global warming, and continue to be so, they have to take the lead in terms reducing their own emissions and also bear the costs of adaptation, including in developing countries.

There is a sub-text to this argument. The developing world, which is by definition poor, does not want to forego economic growth. There is a continuing belief that unlocking the power of carbon is the key to leveraging economic growth. This has been the development route adopted by the North. As a consequence many cities in the developing world still have the modernistic model of the city designed to create undiluted economic growth (the "world class city"), as their planning default. This modernistic vision does little to address either the causes or consequences of climate change, or poverty and inequality for that matter. In the context of this conference's theme, it is clear that this is not a strategy for addressing climate change or promoting the low carbon city.

### *Conflicting Agendas*

Not only this, there is great suspicion in the developing world about the motivation of the North in pursuing the climate change agenda. There is one particular danger emerging from the current debate on climate change that has been appropriated by the North. The term "sustainable development" has become associated with a purely environmental agenda. The problem with this perception is that it tends to place the developed and the developing world at odds. This is because what is regarded by the developed world as environmental sustainability is often perceived by the

developing world as a smokescreen of self-interest, a desire to pull up the ladder now that prosperity has been attained.

The developed world is perceived as causing the problem of global warming by building up greenhouse gases for generations but it now wants the developing world to pay the price in terms of forgoing economic development by adopting a strategy of carbon containment. Discussions in OECD countries about energy policy to address climate change are almost always associated with calls for energy security, thus tending to muddy the waters with regard to the real nature of concerns about reducing consumption of fossil fuels.

### *Reconciliation of Agendas*

The thrust of my argument thus far is that there is a tension between the differing objectives of the North and the South as related to the climate change and these need to be reconciled both in mitigation and adaptation. This is no less the case in planning as in much else. My contention is that we need a strategy for a globally connected planning, a planning that is freed from both modernism and a localism that has lain at the heart of its *raison d'être* over the last 40 years. At the most basic level most of us now understand that the impacts of many planning decisions are not just limited to the local environment - urban sprawl in Las Vegas means managed retreat from coastal cities in Portugal. But there is also a growing appreciation that static, localistic, control-led planning which sees the environment as something that can be protected or destroyed through planning decisions is no longer relevant. The environmental dimension of urban planning is no longer about preserving a fragile environment from further degradation. It is increasingly being seen as something dynamically adapting cities need to do to meet the fast mutating consequences of climate change.

A globally connected planning involves developing a framework for understanding the aspirations of all global citizens and reconciling these in ways so that we get joined-up planning solutions that address climate change. The implications are potentially profound for professional ethics, for the role of national and international planning associations, for education and for the accountability of individual planners. I will not address all these topics here, but I will take a short journey around a number of the sometimes competing elements of such a strategy in the remainder of my speech.

### *Northern Agendas*

It is contended that our globally connected planning has to take on board the aspirations of the developing world. The developing world has no desire to remain poor. Our approaches to climate change cannot just be based on the self-denying ordinances so strongly implicit in some of the concepts of mitigation or in the notion of marginal change implicit in adaptation current in so much of the Northern-derived discourse. I contend that planners have to have to absorb the necessity of growth into their vocabulary and methodologies, and that planning does not have to be strongly associated with restriction and it must become conspicuously more enabling.

Up to 1 billion slum dwellers typically live on incomes of \$1 per day. The slavish application of the planning lexicon of the North, with its dogma of reducing resource consumption as a means of reducing carbon emissions, is a vision from another world in the context of those eking out a existence. Planning concerns about climate change expressed purely from the viewpoint of the North, which can be motivated by a desire to keep things the way they are, mean little to people for whom keeping things the way they are means continuing abject poverty, exclusion and deprivation.

### *Modernist Planning Methodology*

There are other imports from the North into the South that have had and continue to have negative effects. I have commented earlier that the modernist image of the planned city that has been adopted in the developing world has often been disastrous, even without taking into account the new reality of climate change. The modernist planned city has either failed or has delivered benefits only to tiny elites and has exacerbated poverty and exclusion. This is because the mental model of the planned modernist city is frequently at odds with the chaotic reality of poverty.

### *Coming to Terms with Informality*

Planning tends to be based on formal processes. Planning is not good at dealing with informality. But illegal modes of acquisition, sub-division and development are the norm in the slum areas that comprise the majority populations of many developing country cities. This leads to large scale urban sprawl, as formal planning processes cannot keep up and also because they are often subverted for greater financial gains by land speculators. This also has had an impact on the standards of buildings - both residential and high rise; as well as on trunk infrastructure; and the individual connections in buildings; and on poor land documentation which also increases forced eviction. Thus both poverty and environmental damage are perpetuated through cities' failure to come to terms with informality

### *City Failure, Rural Poverty and Climate Change*

This failure to come to terms with informality and poverty has other consequences. Urban poverty also drives global environmental issues. Because many cities, with their unattainable modernist dreams, do not work, they have failed in their traditional role as engines of economic growth and absorbers of surplus labour from rural areas. In desperation, the rural poor cut down forests to provide more agricultural land. It is estimated that as much as 17% of greenhouse gas emissions emanate from tropical deforestation, although an uncertain share of this has to be allocated to the decay of biomass. Tree cutting in Brazil means climate change everywhere. Not only that, forest watersheds that support cities' ability to provide water to new city dwellers are felled by increasingly land-short rural dwellers. Hard on the heels of this follows rangeland degradation and desertification that further compound climate change.

Thus we are in danger of creating a negative feedback loop with ever more dystopic urbanisation. Climate change refugees unable to be supported in the rural areas cannot be absorbed by overwhelmed cities. Hard on the heels of this is city destabilisation and ultimately failed states.

### *Growth through Guided Informality*

Therefore, in the developing world with its burgeoning cities, planning has to become the means by which to deliver economic growth for the poor as part of a globally connected planning strategy to address climate change. This is not necessarily by First World growth characterised by tidy-mindedness and separation of functions that redundant forms of planning have come to exemplify. Most probably it will be a planning that at root comes to terms with an informality characterised by illegal modes of land acquisition, land subdivision and development that is most associated with cities at their earlier stages of rampant urbanisation. Formal planning processes that cannot keep up with the informal market will ensure that uncontrolled urban sprawl will be the result

Therefore planning has to get down and dirty and cannot be sniffily dismissive about being a vehicle for delivering city economic growth. Planners need to ask: "How can we build on the

dynamism of these roaring land markets which are delivering land and housing at scale, through many different approaches? How do we strengthen the market so that it also supports the poor, the vulnerable and women as opposed to delivering benefits largely to slumlords and speculators? How should we understand and work with land markets in a way that makes urbanisation sustainable?”

### *The Lowest Common Denominator*

If planners are able to come to terms with this reality and develop the tools needed to shape at least some of the informal city’s characteristics then it will at worst have helped ward off a dystopic urban scenario, and at best laid the foundation for a better urban future. But this coping strategy is indeed a trade-off for planners hankering after the elevated goal of the resource-efficient and comprehensively planned compact city.

Of course we should not be content with the lowest common denominator. Planning is about thinking ahead and being the vehicle for more noble visions and not just about coping, although if nothing else is possible, coping will have to do. How can planning be made even more fit for the purpose of combating climate change and a major underlying driver, poverty, both urban and rural, than in the scenario just recounted?

### *Reinventing Planning*

First and foremost, planning needs to reinvent itself. It needs to rid itself of the continuing legacy of the welfare state command and control model and which continues to both reflect its deeper world view and bedevil its image. These characteristics allow it to be continued to be pilloried in the media as an obstacle to economic development. This is a consequence of a continuing preoccupation with legalistic land use controls and regulation on which some tactical approaches to the strategic pursuit of compact city overwhelmingly rely.

I would argue that over-reliance on such tactics in most developing countries would be self-defeating. Although the strategic pursuit of the compact city is correct, the promotion of guided pro-poor growth is an essential weapon in planning’s armoury achieving it. However, the more sophisticated city planning becomes the less it should hanker towards turning back to the tactical ploy of increased regulation.

Planning’s parallel history as the market leader in citizen participation, in contrast to its role as regulator, creates the space to position itself at the cutting edge of a modern notion of good governance. I interpret this as meaning that planning has to respond creatively to the expressed needs of a city’s inhabitants rather than regulating them.

Reinvention of planning to take on board climate mitigation and adaptation at city level should take account of some of the following:

- protecting the buffering capacity of local ecosystems;
- increasing energy efficiency in urban transportation;
- ameliorating urban heat islands;
- methodologies for partnering with the private sector;
- participating in global policy dialogues.

If planning explicitly expands its horizon to include such dimensions, it will help make urban planning the lead profession in promoting a robust and integrated response to climate change

But, if old-fashioned expert-driven models of “predict and provide” hold sway there is the danger that only the rich and powerful will continue to appropriate the fruits of development. Therefore, participatory models of “debate and decide”, which involve civil society and elected local representatives, need to become the driving forces for sustainable urban development. For such approaches to be truly effective the resilience of civil society organisations will need to be augmented. Such strategies are more likely to produce decisions that balance social, environmental and economic considerations.

### *Inclusion*

Good governance also implies promotion of the ethic of inclusiveness by planners. If cities are to work, and work they must if climate change is to be mitigated and adaptation is to be successful, all residents have to benefit. Exclusion should be anathema. The recent *State of the World's Cities Report* issued by UN-HABITAT clearly demonstrated that the world's most successful cities tend to be those that are more equal and have lower Gini coefficients. In many cities forced evictions, so often the practice in lieu of sustainable urban planning, must be eschewed. Planners cannot allow such practices to be pursued in their name.

### *Planned Provision of Infrastructure*

In the case of the chaotic developing country city this means that the strategy of creating the more compact city will most probably depend more on the tactics of carrot than stick. City dwellers want accessibility to services such as water supply and transportation, at the cheapest possible cost. Guiding city development through planned provision of infrastructure along defined corridors with easy access to centres of employment at a scale and cost specifically targeted at the majority poor will do much to deliver more compact cities.

Planning practice has to embrace a leapfrogging approach to planning of infrastructure provision. This is part of a green growth strategy. Capital intensive approaches that applied to capital-rich western cities continue to be applied as the norm in developing country cities. Let me illustrate this. Extensive provision for car based transport leads to both local and global environmental impacts. Traffic jams are endemic. In Delhi, cars consume 75% of the road space yet transport only 20% of the people.

Let me give you another example. Pollution of aquifers lying underneath cities by untreated sewage is common. It is caused by assuming that high-cost technologies for sewage treatment are the only suitable alternative. This in turn leads to abstraction of the large quantities of water, often at a great distance from cities, needed for piped sewerage systems. Transmission losses are large, the overall capital and recurrent costs are high, and the overall package often unaffordable, leading to a low hook up rates for the poor, with them suffering most of the consequences.

Indeed even in the richer North many are beginning to question the affordability of some of these models and are rethinking more locally-based and less wasteful solutions where transmission costs are reduced, as are capital and recurrent costs. Urban and global environmental sustainability require no less.

### *Conclusion*

Ladies and gentlemen, I have endeavoured to persuade you that a reinvented planning is an essential element of any strategy designed to tackle climate change in cities. Underpinning such a strategy must be a positive approach to change – not just doom and gloom. Although policy making



is often about hard choices, planners have to develop an optimistic perspective on cities based on harnessing the energy of things that are already happening, particularly in the informal sector.

The modernistic vision of the city based on a western model from a previous era may be unsustainable for the developing world but it does have the propaganda advantage of being optimistic and therefore popular. Although there are costs to dealing with climate change, the discourse should not be led by harping on the financial burden, or the restrictions that need to be born so as to save the planet. The appropriate tactic is for planners to propound a vision of pro-poor economic growth that also delivers local and global environmental benefits. The principal trade-off that planners need to accept is that climate change in the developing world cannot be addressed without acknowledging the need to create urban growth and reduce poverty as the springboard for such. Should such trade-offs be made then doors may be opened for the next evolution of the strategy, that is, the pursuit of the compact city. One element of the narrative has to be accepted before the next can be commenced.

In sum, climate change strategies cannot be pursued in isolation. Any push to reduce our carbon footprint or to create a momentum for adaptation without catering for the economic aspirations of the developing world runs the risk of failure.

Finally, planning has to be fit for purpose if it is to successfully address the climate change. It must as ruthlessly as possible eschew its old “predict and provide” models and pursue governance based models that respond to the promptings of the informal sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, the challenges of climate change and poverty now require an international effort from planning as much as from other actors. There are many other dimensions to this than I have outlined to you. But one thing is clear, planning in one country is no longer enough. A spirit of solidarity is required. UN-HABITAT, as a global agency which has the mandate to address issues of sustainable urban development, stands ready to work with you.

Thank you for your kind attention.