

COMMUNIQUÉ

PLANNING CITIES EXTENSIONS – PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACE FOR EXPANDING CITIES:

Adopting Progressive and Equitable Basic Urban Extension Plans for Growing Cities in Developing Countries

Barcelona, 18 September 2013

Background: On 16 and 17 September 2013 fifty-six (56) experts in urban development from national, regional, and city governments, international organizations, and academia gathered in Barcelona to discuss innovative approaches to the management of urban growth in rapidly urbanizing cities of the developing world. They reached a strong consensus on the important role of urban planning in guiding and managing the next wave of urban population growth in a context of limited economic development.

Global urban trends for the next 30 years are characterised by fast growth of urban population, particularly in Asian and African developing countries, and in particular in intermediate size cities. The most affected cities are also the ones that have the least technical and economic capacity to respond.

If left unchecked, this will result in the increase of slums and urban poverty, higher risks of climate change and social tensions, and congestion and inefficiency of cities across the world. Enormous opportunities will be lost for local and national development and human suffering and depletion of natural resources will set in. The urban advantage will be compromised for generations to come.

Conventional planning and management have evidently not adapted to the dynamics of urban growth. Their failure is demonstrated by non-implemented plans, ineffective urban patterns and the growth of slums and gated communities. The mismatch between the needs and capacities, and the lack of adequate and implementable planning instruments, supported by adequate legal and institutional framework and financing mechanisms, continue to hinder the achievement of sustainable urban patterns and make cities ineffective in supporting adequate living conditions, inclusion and economic progress.

We propose: The EGM, recognising this situation, proposes **a proactive yet simplified urban planning approach** to guide future population growth which is innovative, fast, energetic and practical to match the phenomenal urbanization trends in developing countries. Such an approach can produce better living conditions and more sustainable urban patterns, increase wealth and inclusion and provide a long term impetus to local development. The EGM believes that a simple and credible plan should be considered as an urban management tool that creates value and expands local assets and can improve cities. This response is premised on the following:

Principles:

- Recognise the **importance of public action** in guiding economic and social actors' interventions in the city towards sustainable and lasting urban patterns and the role of urbanism as a **transparent and democratic** tool that could help improve social integration, inclusion and cohesion.
- Recognise the role of urban planning in **creating value and wealth** and in redistributing them in order to ensure **local development**, the **access to housing and services for all** and **environmental sustainability**.
- Focus/prioritise on the **definition of street and public space** of adequate quantity and efficient layout to support effective urban systems and access to public services
- Support the fulfilment of **human rights** and social, economic and environmental **sustainability**, creating **space for the urban poor** and sharing the land values increments emerging from such interventions.

Strategy:

- Promote and develop realistic urban planning and design strategies that can be easily managed by technical and political staff in developing countries, particularly in economies below 5,000 USD GDP per capita.
- Prioritize clear and **basic normative tools**, street patterns and urban planning guidelines that can be **adapted** to different contexts.
- Encourage the promotion and development of **PLANNED CITY EXTENSIONS** connected with the existing urban fabric and infrastructure following the criteria for good urban planning to enable fast growing cities particularly in developing countries to achieve better urbanization patterns and guide the organic processes of growth.
- Provide a **basic urban layout** that allows incremental improvements rather than predefining the final outcome in detail, while governance and institutional capacities are tackled and economic development conditions improve.

This basic urban planning approach should be developed on the basis of the following criteria:

- **In advance** of urban growth, with horizon minimum scope of 30 to 50 years for the main urban development axis and protection areas.
- **At the scale** of the growth, considering a city-wide approach for the realistic projection of needs and options
- **Defining areas** for regulation/consolidation, for restructuring and for new extension at the same time.
- **Well and strategically located** vis a vis environmental constraints and economic drivers, as well as existing infrastructure and transport (particularly public transport).
- **Phased in investment** to supply sufficient urban land every five years distinguishing the development steps of urbanization: street layout, parcellation, building.
- **Aware of the local context**, preferences and traditions in the formal and informal development of urban settlements.
- Prioritising the definition of a **clear layout of streets and common spaces** enhancing connectivity, and social capital.
- Supporting reasonable and **sustainable densities**, which enable service provision and economies of agglomeration.
- Encouraging **mixed land use** and **social mix** and thus increasing efficiency and social integration.
- Supporting the sustainable and efficient **use of resources and ecosystems**, and reducing the exposure of residents to environmental risks due to climate change and other factors.
- Coordinated wherever possible at regional level, where a **system of cities** should be structured to orient and support cities in their local planning, and at metropolitan level.
- Combined as much as possible with interventions for the revitalization, **renewal and optimization in terms of density** of the already built areas in a participatory and integrated way.

Making urban extensions work:

Planned city extensions can only be implemented adequately when an enabling environment is created and sustained. Therefore the EGM calls for the following fundamental conditions to achieve the sustainable extension of cities:

An **adequate legal and institutional framework** that is built on a rights and obligations approach, is developed on the basis of local legitimacy and relevance and that considers the social function of land and accommodates the continuum of property rights, while also providing for minimum basic standards of infrastructure. The legal and institutional framework should also promote transparency and the engagement of the full range of actors in participatory decision-making, support access to capacity building, and, while preserving the essential role of public authorities, create opportunities for entrepreneurs and private initiatives in an equitable manner.

Finance mechanisms/ economic considerations are essential for successful plan implementation and need to be considered from the onset. Objectives should match local institutional capacities and resources available and take into account regional or metropolitan strategies. Extension plans need to consider and avoid possible diseconomies of scale through a cost – benefit analysis of available options. Cost and revenue planning along with physical planning is needed to render economic opportunities. A cadastre and land valuing mechanisms, as well as taxation need to be established at the onset. Plan implementation should adopt mechanisms of land value sharing between the public and private sphere and promote access to credit and the creation of jobs.

In addition, planned cities extensions will require:

The availability of tools and documented experiences for spatial planning and design, land management and revenue sharing. The development of tools for analysis and assessment, a basic city-wide urban structure plan to identify needs and location of extension areas and land readjustment mechanisms such as PiLAR (Participatory and inclusive land readjustment).

Flexible regulations on land use and design guidelines to facilitate density and promote and protect street life, combined with transparent and regulated processes.

Capacity and knowledge development is needed (1) to link existing knowledge of tools with the local context (2) to redistribute knowledge, extend it and build the capacity of trainers, facilitators and local and community leaders to understand the context of urban extensions so that they are appropriately adapted.

Local understanding and analysis should include learning from the informal processes of urban extension, mapping the socio economic analysis to highlight urban conflicts and other social dynamics and analysing expectations of formal and informal actors.

Capacity building should start with joining up existing networks and gathering knowledge in an accessible way, particularly making them accessible to disadvantaged groups. Cities, particular the intermediary cities, should get greater exposure to international networks.

Alliances and Advocacy

Such approaches require aware and committed local leaders, as well as the support of a diversity of actors at all levels. More efficient urban growth benefits business as well as residents and can provide long term solutions to the daily problems faced by badly planned cities. Traditional and new constituencies need to be associated to this endeavour, with a long term commitment to better urban development. It needs to be clear that this approach benefits the city as a whole as well as specific groups, and has advantages for the marginalised as well as for the business sector as it expands assets and opportunities for all.

Local leaders and municipalities need to see the longer term benefits as well as communicate to their residents and stakeholders the shorter term advantages. As we plan for the future, the alliance with academia, education institutions and young professionals is most crucial.

We call for all concerned citizens to join this proposal and discuss it in view of the Post 2015 development goals and adopt it at Habitat III as promising tool for future city development.

With the support of: