

Forum: Environmental Commission
Issue: Reorienting Urban Planning through international linkages among cities
Student Officer: Despina Petradakis
Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Despina Petradakis, and I am a senior at A' Arsakeio Lykeio Psychikou. It is an honor to be serving as a Deputy President of the Environmental Commission in the 8th PSMUN. I have been to 13 MUN conferences thus far, and this will be my fourth time as a Student Officer.

This study guide is going to be just a little step in your extensive research upon the matter. I encourage you to further research any possible aspects of the issue at hand. It is of utmost importance that you are as prepared as possible. The more prepared you are the more confident you'll be participating and debating.

Should any inquiries emerge prior to the conference, do not hesitate to contact me. My e-mail address: dpetra2000@yahoo.com

See you all at the conference!

Yours,
Despina Petradakis

INTRODUCING TOPIC

Half of the world's population already lives in urban areas, with a growing number of these people living in towns and cities in low and middle-income countries. As well as being a demographic phenomenon, urbanization is intricately linked with economic, social and environmental transitions. Increasing urbanization is one of the defining features of this century. This produces particular environmental challenges, but also creates opportunities for urban development that can contribute to broader goals of improving the quality of life for urban residents while achieving greater levels of global sustainability. Thus, a central goal of urban policy is to improve the living conditions of the city dwellers.

In spite of that, people are facing a declining quality of life which is connected with environmental and social conditions. Poor industrial and transport planning have given birth to pollution and stress-related illness. Most urban planning systems do not effectively address sustainability, health, environmental and equity issues. Some of the powerful organizations that affect the urban environment such as transport and energy agencies are not involved.

Traditional planning approaches have proven inadequate to guide urban development in a context of rapid urbanization and in the face of new urban challenges.

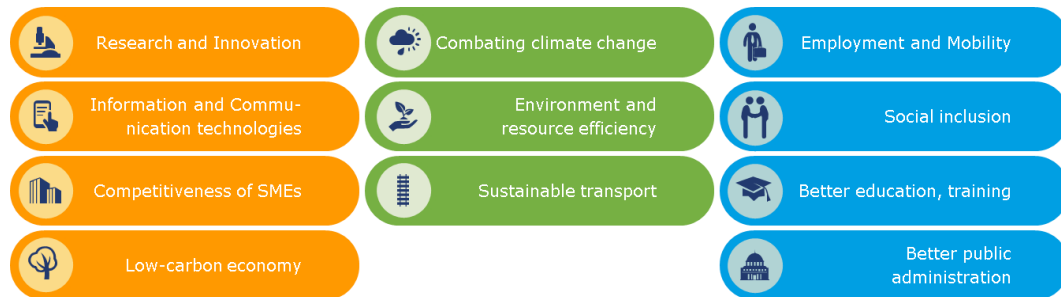
In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process, and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

Prevailing planning and management practices in diverse institutional contexts show that there is often a lack of balance between the three lines of strategic structure planning:

1. Vision without action does not yield tangible results.
2. Action without vision does not address strategic long-term conditions which ensure that essential resources for a good quality urban life are available for future generations.
3. Vision and action without communication are deemed to fail as it does not take into consideration the aspirations of civil society as a whole.

Cities have become increasingly prominent in terms of addressing global environmental issues. Much of this has been around climate change, with the expansion of initiatives such as the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, the launch of the Carbon Cities Climate Registry in 2010, and the initiation of the Durban Adaptation Charter in 2011. Leading cities have begun to demonstrate that the entry point for sustainable urban development does not need to be purely environmental, but rather can be from a dual focus on economic development and environmental objectives.

Peer-learning between municipal employees and elected officials through sister city activities has helped cities implement innovative policies and management techniques in sanitation, water, health, transportation, tourism, economic development, and education.



Sister city programs also often raise funds or collect supplies for natural disasters or other emergencies in their sister cities. Other humanitarian and community development projects include renovation of clinics, the creation of wells, and training for medical personnel.

Networks and networking provide crucial support to the achievement of rural development objectives in Europe through, for example, the sharing of knowledge and exchange of ideas.

KEY TERMS

Urban Planning: A technical and political process concerned with the development and use of land, the planning permission, the protection and use of the environment, the public welfare, and the design of the urban environment, including air, water, and the infrastructure passing into and out of urban areas, such as transportation, communications, and distribution networks

Local Agenda 21:¹ local-government-led, community-wide, and participatory effort to establish a comprehensive action strategy for environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being in the local jurisdiction or area. This requires the integration of planning and action across economic, social and environmental spheres. Key elements are full community participation, assessment of current conditions, target setting for achieving specific goals, monitoring and reporting.

¹ Indented to translate sustainable development principles and objectives into practical action at the local level. Aims of Agenda 21 include: reducing the amount of energy and raw materials society consumes, as well as the pollution and waste it produces; protecting fragile ecosystems and environments; bringing about a fairer distribution of wealth, both between countries and between different social groups within countries – placing a special emphasis not just on the needs but on the rights of poor and disadvantaged people.

Sister City: (city, county, or state) a broad-based, long-term partnership between two communities in two countries. Sister city relationships offer the flexibility to form connections between communities that are mutually beneficial and which address issues that are most relevant for partners.

Sustainable Development: a development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

G20: An international forum for the governments and central bank governors from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union. It aims to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability; it seeks to address issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any one organization.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Any planning systems that have evolved are dependent on a country's legal system and institutional framework.

Generally, despite the differences, planning systems have been the forefront of public efforts to manage development and protect the environment.

There are three main types of planning systems. The first has a clear centralized pattern, though it may have more than one planning tier. The second has a balanced distribution of responsibilities through the different levels. The third has a totally decentralized system with a high degree of autonomy at the different levels. Countries are shifting their planning systems as per their needs and are trying to implement a stricter framework to avoid disastrous decisions.

Scope and methods of urban planning generally comprise of three functions:

1. Long-term strategic planning; provides an integrated vision for the future based on an overall evaluation of strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats
2. Plan-making; “providing frameworks through development strategies and plans at different geographical scales”
3. Development control; includes “legal or administrative procedures operating at the local level to control the location and form of development and change of use within buildings”.

European countries have introduced different types of plans which range from structure plans and strategic plans to local plans. Strategic spatial planning has emerged as a response to the

limitations of Master Plans as a more suitable tool to orient urban spatial development by focusing on city-wide planning and selected priorities.

Master plans have played a central role in the urban planning process. This type of planning is the fundamental tool of urban development and management. Nevertheless, in recent years it has been proven less effective than it could be. It has been severely criticized as being too complex, bureaucratic, time-consuming, static and elitist. Many of its policies can be considered outdated. Today, there is a new emphasis on decentralization, transparency, and accountability. A more flexible, indicative, and proactive type of planning is needed.

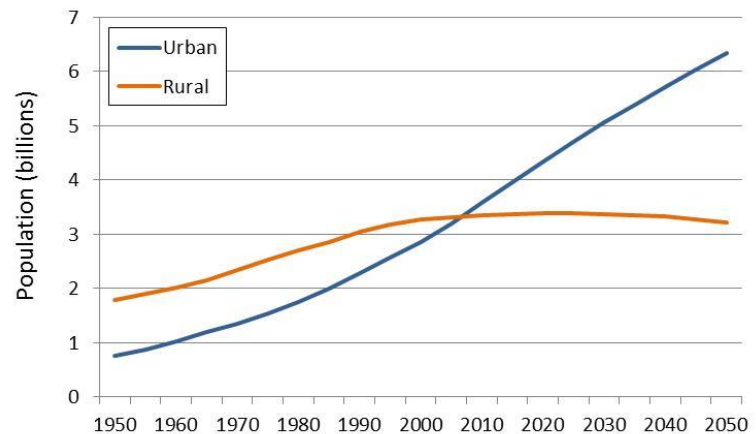


Over the past few years, the G20 has established itself as one of the world's most important forums for dialogue in order to address global challenges and discuss the agenda for economic development. What began as a space for intergovernmental coordination on financial and economic matters now includes a broad agenda of issues, including employment, agriculture, technological change, climate action and the fight against corruption, to name but a few. This enriched G20 agenda went hand in hand with the incorporation into the process of various stakeholders. These stakeholders form various "engagement groups", which provide the perspective of experts from various areas and help to inform and enrich the matters addressed by the leaders. The majority of the topics addressed by the G20 and its engagement groups have an impact on cities; furthermore, the policies and actions that we pursue at local government level are crucial for implementing and driving forward these agendas, and also so that countries are able to fulfill many of the commitments that they undertake in various international forums. In spite of this central importance of cities, until now large cities did not have a channel for dialogue within the G20 that enabled them to contribute their views to the discussion on the development agenda.

Therefore, from Buenos Aires and Paris, and supported by C40, they are launching the Urban20 (U20), a space that enables cities to be involved in the G20. This initiative seeks to establish a forum in which the major cities of the world develop a joint position that helps to inform and enrich the discussion between national leaders during the next G20 summit, which will take place in Buenos Aires towards the end of 2018.

In 2010, for the first time in history, the urban population surpassed the rural population, and by 2050, it is estimated that at least two-thirds of the world's population will live in cities. The transformations brought about by urbanization, and the experience gained by cities with regard to innovation and the quality of their public policies, have the potential to boost well-being and economic growth across the globe.

As part of an inclusive solution to succeed in solving global problems, U20 will work to ensure that cities play an increasingly important role in the response to the development concerns of our time, particularly in the areas of climate action, the future of employment and social integration, starting with the creation of more inclusive, resilient and prosperous societies.



PAST ACTIONS

One Planet City Challenge – WWF, ICLEI (Nov2017)

By combining a friendly biannual competition, capacity building, technical support and public promotion, the One Planet City Challenge encourages more cities to increase ambition and engage in long-term reporting of their climate performance.

Front-Line Cities and Islands – ICLEI, GLISPA (Nov2017)

Front-Line Cities and Islands is a coalition of coastal cities and islands on the front lines of the impact of climate change, working to build resilience coastal city-to island partnerships. It is designed to increase exposure to innovative resilience strategies and creative financing mechanisms.

Collaboration for multilevel climate governance – NDC Partnership, ICLEI (Nov2017)

ICLEI and the NDC Partnership are now working together to design, implement and align climate action strategies across all levels of governments.

COUNTRIES and NGOs INVOLVED

C40:

C40's Measurement and Planning Initiative supports cities to adopt a data-driven and strategic approach to tackling climate change by:

1. Developing standards and tools to measure GHG emissions and forecast future emission scenarios;
2. Providing access to training and technical support on all aspect of the climate action planning; and
3. Facilitating knowledge and data transfer, and peer-to-peer exchange between C40 cities.

Climate action for Urban sustainability (CURB)² is being used by cities to explore potential emission reduction targets, support development of city climate action plans, and prioritize investments.

International City Leaders (ICL) works to:

1. Bridge the knowledge gap between local and central governments, urban professions, and academia in the field of sustainable urban development.
2. Provide a forum for mayors, elected officials and city leaders to exchange practical know-how for solutions to persistent urban challenges.
3. Create opportunities for partnerships at local, national and international levels, based upon trust and evidence-led policy implementation.
4. Encourage and facilitate the application of innovative approaches to realizing the goal of prosperous and inclusive cities for all.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability the leading global network of more than 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future.

Sister Cities International: “Peer-learning between municipal employees and elected officials through sister city activities has helped cities implement innovative policies and management techniques in sanitation, water, health, transportation, tourism, economic development, and education. Sister city programs also often raise funds or collect supplies for natural disasters

² An interactive scenario planning tool designed specifically to help cities take action on climate change. The user-friendly tool allows cities to:

- **Identify and prioritize** low-carbon infrastructure and other greenhouse gas reduction actions;
- Quickly understand the **impact on emissions** and **financial performance** of potential actions;
- Develop, **compare and explore** multiple scenarios;
- Draw on extensive **built-in city, national and region-specific data** to refine this with **city specific** data where available.

or other emergencies in their sister cities. Other humanitarian and community development projects include renovation of clinics, the creation of wells, and training for medical personnel”.

North America Sister city relationships focus on fostering cooperative linkages.

Portland, USA-Khabarovsk, Russia the two cities have a history of working together on urban planning and management.

Portland, USA Ranked as one of the most environmentally friendly cities in the world, Portland is famous for its best practices in land-fill and public transportation systems. Its waste water cleaning system is one of the most advanced in the country.

Toronto, Canada is involved in the resolution of urban management issues in the World Association of Major Metropolises, the International Union of Local Authorities, and the ICLEI has worked with **Istanbul, Turkey** on waste disposal, site preparation, computer services, mapping environmental control, and urban transport.

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)/Interreg provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from the different Member States. The overarching objective of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) is to promote a harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the Union as a whole. Interreg is built around three strands of cooperation: cross-border (Interreg A), transnational (Interreg B) and interregional (Interreg C).

European Structural and Investment Funds Five main Funds work together to support economic development across all EU countries, in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy:

1. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
2. European Social Fund (ESF)
3. Cohesion Fund (CF)
4. European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
5. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the structure that brings together all the stakeholders aiming to achieve improved rural development results in the EU



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

NAMES AND DATES	NOTES
1969 Friends of the Earth	Dedicated to the prevention of environmental degradation, the preservation of diversity and the role of citizens in decision-making
1969 Partners in Development and IDRC (1970)	First of the international commissions to consider a new approach to development, focused on research and knowledge in the South
1971 International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)	Seek ways for countries to make economic progress without destroying the environmental resource base (UK)
1972 Environment et Development du Tiers-Monde (ENDA)	Established in Senegal, in 1978 becoming an international NGO concerned with empowering local peoples, eliminating poverty, and promoting southern research and training for sustainable development
1978 OECD Directorate of the Environment	Re-launches research on environmental and economic linkages
1990 International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)	Established in Canada
Single European Act of 1992	A process of 'Europeanization' that also had its effect on urban planning
Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992	Working towards international agreements which respect the interests of all and protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system
Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992	Agenda 21, a non-binding, action plan of the United Nations with regard to sustainable development, was established
2000 UN Millennium Development Goals	The largest-ever gathering of world leaders agrees to a set of time-bound and measurable goals for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women, to be achieved by 2015.
2001 China joins the WTO	Accelerating national structural economic changes. The accession signals China's emergence, together with India and Brazil, as major new forces in the global economy
2002 Global Reporting Initiative	Releases guidelines for reporting on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of business activities.
2005 Kyoto Protocol enters into force	Legally binding developed country parties to goals for greenhouse gas emission reductions, and establishing the Clean Development Mechanism for developing countries. Emissions reductions obligations expire at the end of 2012
2008 Increasing urbanization	First time in history, more than 50 percent of the world's population lives in towns and cities

2008 Green economy ideas enter the mainstream	National governments invest a portion of their economic stimulus in environmental actions, and a low-carbon economy and green growth become new objectives for the future economy
2009 G20 Pittsburgh Summit	G20 nations provide guidance for a 21st century global, sustainable and balanced economy
2011 China shifts to a “green economy.”	China’s 12th Five Year Plan for economic development is based on sustainable development goals
2012 Rio +20	the global community reconvenes in an effort to secure agreement on “greening” world economies

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As far as planning is concerned instead of seeking a balance between the benefits of development against the costs to the environment and health, planners should find solutions that can achieve environmental, social, and economic goals. Additionally, planning systems



with rigid zoning plans need to become more flexible, so as to respond to environmental challenges. Furthermore, cities should embark on a systematic and integrated process to produce and implement healthy and sustainable plans as part of their Local Agenda 21 programs. Lastly, cities would be the most benefited if and when enriching spaces such as the G20.

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