

Annual International Conference 2017: Leave No One Behind: Setting the Land Agenda to 2030, Muntgebouw, Leidseweg 90, Utrecht, 29-30 June 2017



Policy/practitioners' Round Table on the Urban Land Agenda for 2030

29 June 2017, 11.30 - 13.00 hrs

Organiser/facilitator: Dr. Emiel Wegelin, UrbAct/IDS Utrecht University

Round Table participants:

Mr. Claudio Acioly, Head Capacity Development Unit, UN-Habitat, Nairobi (tbc)

Mr. William Cobbett, Director Cities Alliance, Brussels

Dr. Anna Walnycki, International Institute for the Environment and Development (IIED), London

Ms. Danielle Hirsch, Director, Both ENDS, The Hague (tbc)

Dr. Paul Rabe, Co-ordinator Urban Land Governance program, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Rotterdam

Dr. Richard Sliuzas, Associate Professor in Urban Planning, Department of Urban and Regional Planning and Geo-information Management, ITC - University of Twente, Enschede (tbc)

Background

In September 2015 the UN General Assembly has adopted the global post-2015 development agenda. Several of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly address the issue of access to land and land development, including SDGs 2, 9, 11, 13 and 15. SDG 11 addresses the contribution of cities and human settlements to sustainable development to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”

This has been reaffirmed in the global UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador, where the New Urban Agenda was adopted by the UN Participant States. The New Urban Agenda has set a new global strategy around urbanization for the next two decades. The SDGs and the New Urban Agenda address sustainable development and urban development globally, unlike the previous MDGs and Habitat Agenda which focused exclusively on developing countries.

The LANDac Annual International Conference 2017: “Leave No One Behind: Setting the Land Agenda to 2030” will look back over the decade since the land grab “hype” began, analysing the processes of transformations that have taken place in those locations where investments have been made and revisiting our understanding of the implications of these investment flows for food security, rural livelihoods and local development. The conference will also look forward in assessing new challenges in the field, such as land governance in the context of climate change and increasing urbanisation, and land in relation to the SDGs, using existing knowledge to set the land agenda to 2030 and ensure no one is left behind.

This conference follows on from the LANDac Annual International Conference 2016, which connected rural land debates to the urban agenda. The 2017 conference takes the all-encompassing SDGs as a starting point to explore how land governance can contribute to meeting these targets, and ultimately help to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Providing people with secure and equal access to land is fundamental in realising this objective, and is particularly relevant in the Goals that will be further explored in this conference.

Scope of the Round table

Urbanisation proceeds rapidly : the global urban population share is up from 30% of the total population in 1950 to 54% in 2015, and expected to be 66% in 2050 – the absolute number of urban population being 4 billion in 2015, expected to grow to 6.3 billion in 2050, with this growth virtually all taking place in developing countries. The land take of urban expansion is even more dramatic, variously estimated at more than double the urban population growth in percentage terms. As a result urban population densities have declined significantly as urbanisation has proceeded, and this trend is expected to continue in the absence of effective policies guiding conversion of land from rural to urban use.

The urban part of the global Land Agenda to 2030 is thus becoming increasingly important, requiring adequate responses at national and city level, given urban population pressure as against limitations in infrastructure, land availability, financial and governance resources. More effective and more equitable urban land utilisation will be a key success factor in this, particularly in urban expansion areas and low-lying coastal urban delta areas. Integrated infrastructure planning, - financing, - implementation and – O&M will be critical in achieving this.

The Round Table will review the key ingredients for an effective and equitable global Urban Land Agenda, focusing on urban land tenure issues, urban land and infrastructure development, options for enhancing the climate change resilience of urban infrastructure, land-based urban finance options as well as identifying prospects for enhancing urban land management, infrastructure integration and inclusiveness, urban finance and capacity constraints and – development. The Round Table will review the strategic land management vantage points in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III in Quito.

The Round Table discussion will serve to provide a global urban land development policy perspective as a frame of reference for the conference participants. Each Round Table participant will provide his/her perspective on the above issues from her/his specific vantage point and experience. The Round Table will be conducted during 1 ½ hours as a moderated panel discussion with audience participation.

Themes to be addressed at the Round Table

The moderator will introduce the round table participants and will then ask participants in turn to comment on some of the themes summarized below. Panel participants are expected to respond as much as possible by drawing on cases of (good) practice. The moderator will steer the discussion from initial general issues to practical policy choices, and will ensure that there will be adequate time for the audience to raise questions and issues in the debate.

- i. **Urban expansion back drop** - the global urban land take dimensions are staggering, as is the adverse impact of unplanned expansion on the quality of urban life, housing and infrastructure adequacy, and housing and land prices – how to reduce its pace and make it more efficient, more equitable and more sustainable?
- ii. The **limited articulation of urban land issues** in SDG 11 (and its targets) and in the NUA adopted at Quito (viz. paras 69, 104 and 137 in the NUA document) is surprising in the light of the enormity of the urban expansion land take; were the urban land issues too hot a potato to swallow in the SDG and NUA development process, is there a lack of understanding of the dynamics of urban growth or are there other reasons?
- iii. **National urban policies** (viz. indicators targets 11 a and b for SDG 11) and broad land tenure policies need to be articulated nationally, put in place and effectively implemented to make sure that “leave no one behind” will not remain an empty slogan. What tools does the international community have to promote and ensure adoption and effective implementation of such policies?
- iv. **Low-key planning for more effective urban land management** and – development in expansion areas is essential, including land-sharing, land pooling/readjustment projects; while these approaches are old concepts dating from the 1950s and 1960s, they continue to have an important role to play and need to be pursued vigorously. What recent cases of good practice can help to promote such approaches?
- v. **Coordinated infrastructure development** (particularly urban transport and water supply) is essential to enhance the integration and inclusiveness of urban expansion. What are the ingredients for success?
- vi. The level of de-facto **urban land tenure security**, particularly in slum areas, need to be increased to ensure that the access targets 11.1 and 11.2 under SDG 11 can be achieved. What positive examples of security of land tenure enhancing policies and approaches will contribute to this?
- vii. The sticks and the carrots: how to make better use of **urban land as a resource to finance public urban infrastructure development**: land-based local finance instruments – the property tax, vacant land tax, capital gains tax and all that, as well as matching central government grants to incentivise the system – what are examples of good practice?
- viii. Complementing increasing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of urban expansion areas: **densification of existing city centres** (high levels of unintended vacant land in many cities suggest low-hanging fruit): towards the compact city – what are the possibilities and constraints?

ix. **Effective and transparent land registration** is conditional to appropriate planning and resource mobilization: how to define Fit for Purpose for this in the light of capacity constraints?

x. **Metropolitan delta cities** see the above problems compounded by multi-jurisdictional governance issues and serious ecological problems caused by land subsidence. What specific climate change adaptation and - mitigation measures need to be put in place in such specific circumstances?

xi. Clearly the **capacities to manage the growing urban areas** are lagging quite far behind the rapidly growing need. What are the specific capacity constraints and – development needs (and how can European institutions help)?