Capacity development in light of an Urban Sustainable Development Goal – SDG 11

Targets, actors, stakeholders and the kind of capacity we need for our urban future

Rotterdam, June 29th, 2015

This report is the result of a collective effort carried out by the organisers and participants of a **Workshop on the Urban Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)** hosted by the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) on May 20th, 2015.

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1. Foreword

The year 2015 is of crucial importance to the global future of urban development. With 2015 marking the end of the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs), which were established in 2000, the post-2015 global agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ongoing preparations for the Habitat III Conference in 2016, will define the future of global urban agendas. In Europe for example, the new Urban Agenda for the EU is currently being discussed and, and will be adopted in 2016,

In view of this, the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) hosted a meeting to gather urban professionals, researchers and academics in order to discuss and better understand which capacities will be needed to implement the Urban Sustainable Development Goal (Urban SDG) and its proposed 10 targets.

This report is based on the outcomes of that day-long workshop which took place on 20th of May 2015 at IHS in Rotterdam.

Why use the Urban SDG as a starting point? In 2015, for the first time in human history, all UN members will be called to agree on a specific global target for urban areas. This is the right opportunity to garner greater attention to making cities work better. Once established, these targets will shape the agendas and drive the direction of funding, therefore the Urban SDG was an obvious starting point. The flow of funds will have a strong impact on the future of our world. A significant push with money can be disastrous in the wrong direction, or can guide cities and efforts in the right direction. Rather than trying to adapt or change the SDG, the workshop reflected on the capacity development implications for implementing the SDG. The angle of capacity development may however eventually also help to tackle some of the shortcomings of the targets.

Are there common denominators across the different sub-goals? In order to reflect the complexity that cities have, we synthesized the outcomes of the discussions on the different sub-goals, rather than looking at them separately.

It is our expectation that this document will inspire and inform all those who are involved with the promotion of the Urban SDG, as well as those entrusted with the task of achieving its targets in the coming fifteen years. In other words, we want to inform those who will have to take the responsibility to implement the Urban SDG – and who will need the capacities for doing so.

The authors have incorporated as much as possible of the valuable contributions that were made. Unfortunately not all of the material could be fully included in order to keep the report concise. We take responsibility for any misinterpretations and apologise for any mistakes made.

2. Executive summary and recommendations

The discussions around the thematic tables, in line with the 10 proposed targets of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 11, revealed some cross-cutting elements and common visions. A general trend observed by the participants was the need to come up with new approaches in capacity development, as the transforming urban challenges indicated in the targets of SDG 11 also require new capacities and actors.

One suggestion was to consider enhancing "soft skills", such as the capacity to facilitate and manage complexity with a multidisciplinary approach. In addition to enhancing the skills themselves, these should be considered as equally important for urban professionals as technical knowledge. The communication with citizens, engagement with local actors and the comprehension of issues as they emerge from the ground, is decisive for urban development. Equally, a proliferation of organisations and actors engaged in urban areas and their development, needs to be addressed and embedded in new strategies. This requires flexibility at the individual and the institutional level and can best be achieved through experimental approaches and by learning from experience. Eventually, the future ways of developing urban capacities will be an essential contribution to achieving better cities for all – and urban knowledge institutions need to assume responsibility for this.

The contexts of the targets were debated throughout the discussions and can be summarized as:

How the world changed since the MDGs were agreed on: When it comes to governance, decentralisation processes are ongoing, along with the subsidiarity principle which still holds value, yet at the same time immense complexities and new levels of governance added which actually require a greater level of coordination, playing out at the local level. Moreover, new power relations between levels of government are emerging. Cities can be the frontrunners for transformative development and also influences policies, which might even influence national policy setting. The question is, which level will be most effective for implementation? Will it, for instance, be the creation of a new metropolitan level governance, or rather an inter-municipal level of implementation when it comes to functional regions and peri-urban areas? Especially in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation there is a need for an umbrella of sustainable, long-term, preventative actions and coordination between stakeholders. The fact that disasters have natural boundaries whilst the administrative boundaries are artificial, pinpoint that the need to adapt locally may be originated by actions elsewhere. Moreover, coordination between different policy levels is necessary.

Looking at other major changes since Habitat II, there is a daunting degree of inequality, with wider income gaps and deepening poverty in many cities across the world[1]. Furthermore, income gaps between rich and poor are expanding in both developed and developing countries, with Gini coefficient increasing in a large majority of OECD countries even within periods of sustained economic and employment growth[2]. This goes hand in hand with urban segregation in terms of housing and income groups. Cities are experiencing increasing levels of intra-urban inequalities which have negative outcomes and consequences not only on urban development, but also on national development, both socially and economically. Tackling this issue will have to be of high priority for any policy on sustainable development and as such, there is a dedicated target (SDG 10). Further trends and challenges that need to be acknowledged by the global discussion on sustainable urban development include migration, the emergence of new actors, such as the middle class, and the impact of new technologies.

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[1] UN Habitat 2013. State of the world's cities 2012/2013, Routledge, New York. Available: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/745habitat.pdf

[2] OECD 2011. Divided We Stand; why inequality keeps rising. OECD Publishing. Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264119536-en

The quality of the proposed indicators was considered problematic throughout the discussions. Firstly, they may be inconsistent in what they measure, while there are also several duplications. Secondly, the geographical regions we are speaking of vary widely. This calls for more specific indicators, which can be developed by breaking down what should be achieved, how and where. Thirdly, if the global ambition is maintained, more attention is needed for choosing and formulating the indicators.

This report aims to contribute to drawing links, possible integration and modifications to the proposed targets and indicators. Although the political discussion over the SDGs has almost concluded, we see the need to further explore the targets in order for them to be achieved.

Thereby, it seems important to assess outcomes beyond merely quantitative indicators, to also include qualitative ones where essential, or choose another entry point for the targets' indicator which will imply specific qualitative characteristics. For example, the indicator for goal 11.a seems to be merely a 'tick box', of either having or not having a policy framework, but doesn't specify anything about the quality or content of such a policy framework.

The discussion around the different thematic tables revealed some of the loopholes of indicators. They seem to lack a proper understanding of the complexity of cities. In section 7, under each target we discuss the main critical points of the proposed indicators.

The essential need for an entry point for the implementation of a target, which guides the direction of how the target can be achieved, and allows us to learn from putting things into practice in a specific context. This entry point is closely connected to which indicators are chosen. For instance, infrastructure or a guiding principle for the land market can be an entry point to commence capacity development for implementation across all levels of government and across sectors. Politically too, an entry point is needed, to be able to have a more meaningful underlying point for monitoring. The challenges are knowledge and deep understanding of what would make the right entry point.

The flow of funds will direct much of this, and impact the future of our world. National governments and international donors will follow up on the Urban SDG, which is yet another reason and motivation to be precise in the formulation of the targets and indicators.

3. The Urban SDG - background

2015 will see the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals campaign. This campaign, officially inaugurated at the United Nations' Millennium Summit in September 2000, aimed at reducing extreme poverty by accomplishing a series of time-bound targets. The MDGs focused on developing countries, but required a global partnership model, demanding action also from developed countries. With the conclusion of the MDGs in 2015, the global community needs to define what comes next.

A high-level UN member state summit in September 2015 is expected to agree on a post-2015 development agenda and to adopt a new set of goals building on the achievements and the remaining challenges of the MDGs. The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) led to the agreement on a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The proposed SDGs, as developed by an Open Working Group (OWG), intend to address all three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic manner. The 17 proposed goals will cover a wider spectrum of themes and are expected to be in line with the current global challenges, including those faced by developed countries. The 17 proposed SDGs represent a shift towards sustainable human development with a universal agenda applicable in all countries.

Among the wide range of themes covered, the proposed **Goal 11** has a specific focus on urban settlements: **make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.** As for all SDGs, the proposed SDG11 is further outlined under 10 targets, covering a wide range of sustainable urban themes, such as (11.1) Housing; (11.2) Transport; (11.3) Planning; (11.4) Heritage; (11.5) Vulnerability; (11.6) Environment; (11.7) Public Spaces; (11.a) Urban-Rural relations; (11.b); Integrated policies; (11.c) Governmental Capacities. It is noteworthy that the last three of the 10 targets are Means of Implementation (MOI) targets, which might have more impacts and hence have triggered more discussions[3]. The Urban SDG campaign, formed by a number of high-level organisations involved in urban development, has been advocating to take a clear stance on urban issues in the post-2015 process.

With the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development - HABITAT III - coming up in Quito in October 2016, it is of crucial importance to include urban themes in the global sustainable development debate. The HABITAT conferences, occurring every twenty years, represent a key moment for urban policies, with a New Urban Agenda discussed by member states for 2036. Furthermore, at the European level, EU member states are discussing a new European Urban Agenda, to be adopted during the Dutch presidency of the EU in the first semester of 2016. This document is expected to drive urban policies for Europe for the years to come.

> The **Campaign for an Urban SDG** "has been launched because the dynamism of cities represents a major sustainable development opportunity and out of the belief that a **dedicated and stand-alone urban SDG** is essential to mobilize stakeholders, promote integrated, city-level approaches, and accelerate progress towards sustainable development, including the end of extreme poverty." (http://urbansdg.org). Over 400 cities, urban networks, organisations and leading knowledge institutions support it.

With urbanisation being one of the major current and future global trends, the SDGs need to incorporate urban issues in the global sustainable development agenda that is expected to guide public

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[3] "The ethos of the means of implementation (MOI) in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) framework encompasses not only financial resources and technology transfer for the implementation of sustainable development, but also the structural reform of international financial and trade architectures. Developing countries in the UN have persistently argued in various UN conferences, negotiations and debates that without structural reforms, development on all three economic, social and environmental dimensions will remain impeded over the long-term." (https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/252-the-millenium-development-goals/52671-means-of-implementation-nearly-toppled-process-of-sdgs-agenda.html)

and private actions for the period 2015 to 2030. Already, in a second Urban Sustainable Development Goal Campaign Consultation on Targets and Indicators, several revisions were suggested, "taking care to maintain the integrity and structure of the Goal 11 and associated targets".

The IHS' expert meeting, following the same spirit, has taken the Bangalore Outcome Document[4] as a point of departure in order to contribute to the global discussion. As such, we combined the OWG and Bangalore targets, to best bundle the expertise of the participants and organisations they represent around the themes of the targets. Whatever formulation for the Urban SDG and the targets will be agreed on, the capacity needed to implement such targets and monitor their progress, is at the heart of what the coming decade(s) will look like in terms of sustainable urban development.

The workshop took place in a world café' format, gathering experts around thematic tables to discuss over different rounds, the challenges and opportunities, actions and solutions, actors and stakeholders and the capacities needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 11. This format allowed for active participation of all experts in the discussion.

4. Capacity Development for Sustainable Urban Development

The ongoing discussion over sustainable urban development and the future post-Habitat III Urban Agenda, brings the role of capacity development into the spotlight. The varying challenges that cities and human settlements are facing and the different paths that their development is taking, creates the necessity to adapt capacity development to this dynamic environment.

Capacity development is about creating the conditions for this to happen. The perception of what capacity development is, covers a wide range: in the narrowest sense it equates with the training of human resources at the individual and organisational level, while in a broader sense, it encompasses organisational and institutional development. Therefore, institutional and legal frameworks can be enablers or a major constraint[5]. Given the growing complexities in and of urban areas, new knowledge is continuously created and simultaneously, capacities need to be re-shaped. To be able to deal with the continuous transformation of the urban, nowadays capacity development addresses all citizens and stakeholders, who are actors and beneficiaries of urban development at the same time. What is often referred to as the co-production of the city also includes the notion of the co-production of knowledge and leads into a new way of defining urban capacities.

Possessing the right capacities locally and globally is fundamental for addressing the already known and the recently recognised challenges of sustainable urban development. On one side, organisations which provide training to urban professionals need to adjust their education offer in terms of methods and content to the current and future trends of urban development. On the other hand, research and academic institutions must contribute to the current debate on sustainable urban development through their studies and by bringing innovative practices to the spotlight. Eventually, our ways of perceiving urban problems determine the ways we intend to solve them. Hence, all three aspects of modern urban knowledge institutions – research (i.e. the creation of knowledge), teaching (i.e. the sharing of knowledge, the development of capacities) and applying (i.e. the validation/operationalization of knowledge e. g. through advising cities, governments and citizens) are closely linked and of equal importance to contribute to a better urban future.

Institutions providing capacity development need to be able to recognise the **challenges and opportunities** emerging in urban areas across the globe. Global trends need to be properly understood, within their local context and their specific features. Knowledge institutions must also be able to identify, develop and transfer **actions and solutions** which respond to the main challenges and opportunities. Such knowledge, directly emerging from responses to practical issues, need to be properly streamlined in order to reach the **actors and stakeholders** responsible for their implementation. Today, the ability of international knowledge institutions to remain up-to-date and relevant is linked to their ability to connect with old and new partners in the complex field of the urban[6]. Thereby, knowledge must be created within a certain context, and move away from a notion of capacity building which originates with Western values and beliefs, which has often been unsuccessful and even detrimental, when applied to other contexts and country settings.

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[5] Adapted from: Building Capacity for Better Cities; Concepts and Strategies. Report developed from the discussions held at the Round table 'Human Resource Development for Better Cities', Rotterdam, The Netherlands in October 1995 and at the Habitat II conference, Istanbul, Turkey, June 1996. Available: http://www.ihs.nl/research/library/moving_towards_habitat_iii/habitat_country_reports_of_the_istanbul_habitat_ii_conference/other_background_documents_for_habitat_ii/

[6] Are we making cities work? The impact of 50 years of capacity building for housing and urban development. Paper prepared for the 6th Urban Research and Knowledge symposium (URKS6); held at Barcelona Spain October 8-10, 2012. Available: http://www.ihs.nl/research/library/moving_towards_habitat_iii/habitat_country_reports_of_the_istanbul_habitat_ii_conference/other_background_documents_for_habitat_ii/

For each of the thematic targets of the Urban Sustainable Development Goal, the meeting identified the most relevant challenges and opportunities, actions and solutions, actors and stakeholders and eventually the capacities needed to address all of these. By scrutinising each target individually, the meeting critically reflected on the directions that urban development is expected to take, and the role that capacity development needs to fulfil in order to guide these.

5. Common denominators: from challenges towards capacities to tackle them

What are the most important challenges and opportunities related to the targets of the Urban SDG? Which actions and solutions can be applied to tackle them? Who are the actors and stakeholders who should play a central role in their implementation? What capacities do actors and stakeholders need?

The discussion about the specific targets and themes of the Urban SDG resulted in a significant number of common denominators being identified. The outcomes also indicated that the main challenges for urban sustainability continue to be the need for more integrative approaches in urban development, both in terms of sectors as well as stakeholders; for improved ways to better steer and monitor planning and implementation; and eventually to stimulate the efficiency of the public sector. Though these have been identified for some time, they still remain unsolved globally.

Starting from a set of challenges that cut across different targets, it has been possible to identify a number of key actions that can address them, by a selected set of actors, which would require specific capacities. These common denominators can be summarised as 'guiding principles for capacity development strategies', which the participants felt were missing from the Urban SDG:

A. **More integrative approaches** are needed to overcome the well-known challenge of sector planning and silo mentality, which often leads to fragmented and hence inefficient urban policies. The division in sectors, combined with the lack of communication and the exchange of knowledge between different levels of government and sectors, lead to tension rather than solutions. Moreover, conflicting aims or differently envisaged short-term and long-term benefits might pose a threat to the development of integrated instruments.

   Actions: The development of knowledge sharing platforms and new governance systems would allow a better flow of information within organisations and inter-organisational agreements, facilitating knowledge sharing. Organisations and governments need to create the space to experiment and learn to be more flexible, reactive to change and adaptive to the local context. There is the need for an entry point, in the form of specific project(s) to tackle a shared problem, from which actors and stakeholders can start to learn how to effectively work together, coordinating among all stakeholders, between sectors and departments, levels of government, and spatial scales. New urban knowledge should be co-created by all stakeholders, without relying solely on established expert views.

   Capacities: Different levels of government are required to perform such actions, in partnership with research and knowledge organisations, the private sector or the civil society that can spot new trends, solutions and experimental approaches. Inter-municipal organisations can support knowledge sharing.
   This requires the capacity to:
   - Connect and coordinate stakeholders
     - Know who the relevant actors are for each specific purpose (project)
     - Meaningfully engage all relevant actors and stakeholders for a specific purpose (or project), balance power differences, enhance synergies between levels of government and their respective roles, develop capacities for network management and dialogue
   - Integrate multidisciplinary knowledge
     - Manage the joint production of policies and knowledge, implement integrated multidisciplinary policies, transfer and co-produce knowledge with different organisations, include new methods to strengthen ties between working groups,

mitigate tensions arising between different types of expertise (e.g. host meetings in a neutral space).

- Balance different sectors, stakes, stakeholders and values, creating more collaborative institutions for policy implementation through new forms of leadership
- Create new partnerships and manage them
- Collect and process data across the sectors to better determine the most adequate solution
- Establish feedback loops about integrated policy results with evidence coming from the ground (with relevant research institutions and citizens) and allow evidence to inform new rounds of policy. Making sure that policies are integrated (in form) is not sufficient.
- Make small-scale solutions and spaces for experimentation more common place, to allow for true contextualisation in overcoming of hurdles, which can be very specific.

B. **Urban coalitions** rather than meaningless participation. A formalised, sometimes obligatory participation, in forms that resemble more consumer consultations than an active integration of citizens, challenges the spirit of making cities for all. Participation too often is understood as an undesired requirement and outsourced to short-term consultants to adhere to project or legal requirements only. This leads to a disconnection from the problems, which emerge on the ground and limits the involvement of citizens.

Actions: participation requires the implementation of schemes allowing the establishment of meaningful and effective coalitions between all stakeholders, resulting in lasting connections and a reliable engagement with civil society. It will help to enhance contributions, which citizens and civil society can make, it will release social capital and improve policies to better work on the ground. This requires that sufficient time is calculated during planning, implementation and evaluation. Participation should less be "imposed" by authorities, who should rather play a facilitative role, supporting the emergence of bottom-up initiatives.

Capacities: initiatives can be taken by local governments, citizens and their organisations. This requires the capacity to:
- engage with citizens, empowering them and building support systems for front liners in participation processes
- Balance power differences –by making planning, budgets and policies simple, understandable and transparent
- raise citizens' awareness of the processes of urban development, engage a variety of stakeholders and build coalitions possibly around themes, locations or the need to cooperate and coordinate
- monitor public policies, with active involvement and responsibilities of citizens and civil society organisations

C. **Better monitoring and critical reflection of the outcomes.** Difficulties in showing the results of applied policies, combined with shortcomings in the presentation of their benefits, lead to unclear and sometimes unpopular outcomes. This in turn has an impact on the legitimacy of planning and policy for the common good, as well as for the strengthening of revenue streams towards the concerned areas. This issue is strongly related to the selection of the right indicators. Instead of overburdening local governments with monitoring and evaluation

tasks, which mainly aim to meet the requirements of their reports, the core is the need for assessing activities and learning from them. Furthermore, impacts of urban policies need to be communicated in an exhaustive and clear way.

Actions: an adequate monitoring of development processes is core to improving planning and management. The critical reflection of outcomes should guide and improve future action. Moreover, these issues are related to accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. They increase transparency and contribute to more integrative approaches. Other instruments, such as participatory planning and budgeting, can play a supporting role here. As every city has different features, it is important to formulate the right entry point for defining *why* certain, integrated policies are needed, which benefits will result, and who should be accountable for the outcomes.

Capacities: Research and knowledge organisations can develop such methods to measure and show the impact of policies, in collaboration with the private sector, media and trend watchers. Furthermore, it is recommendable to have systems for monitoring put in place by large international agencies, or by national governments.
This requires the capacity to:
- Speak the language of different sectors and groups
  e.g. communicate taxation and expenditure issues well
- Develop good communication strategies
- Communicate the results of policies
- Develop policies in such a way that also small benefits on the way to achieving the larger goal become visible
- Assess outcomes beyond quantitative indicators, monitor integrated policies through their integrated impact
  Produce evidence of the benefits of making integrated policies being accountable to civil society/citizens in a crucial, corrective role
  Assess through audits rather than indicators
- Learn from experimental and innovative cases
  Synergise with international knowledge institutions on notable cases
  Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing
  Implement solutions from different contexts
- Contextualise goals, objectives, principles, even when local realities are diverse

D. (**Local) government's human resources**: Limited staff capacity and motivation is especially a problem for local governments in the Global South. Local government should represent an attractive work environment, not just in terms of employment conditions, but for the possibility to make an impact on the local environment. Governments need the most motivated staff with the right capacity to address local issues. An unsatisfactory performance by the public sector affects the perception of urban prospects and severely limits other guiding principles, namely the interest to cooperate and the access to information about ongoing processes. This backfires and leads to frustrations for the public administration and the citizens it serves.

Actions: Capacity development as well as specific knowledge through established connections with organisations from different sectors represents an incentive by itself. Recognition and reputation of public officials is a remedy against frustration and can be fostered by investing in the other guiding principles. Even so, particularly at the local

government level of non-metropolitan cities, employment conditions need to be improved in order to attract and retain qualified staff, and in order to avoid or reduce incentives for corruption.

<u>Capacities:</u> All levels of government are required to take actions. This requires the capacity to:

- Enable municipalities to implement within their capacities
- Mix local and technical knowledge, capacitate their staff
- Develop new terms of employment, design new positions
- Engage in required institutional/organisational change to facilitate integrative planning and programming
- Set strong public administration agendas, with public interest at the core
- Peer-learning from other governments
- transfer knowledge from those working on the ground and cooperate with grassroot organsations
- Distribute better the career opportunities, resources and recognition for staff who work in municipalities promoting leadership within the public sector

6. Synthesis of the discussion per target

The following section presents an overview of each target of the Urban SDG on a single page, reflecting the table discussion for each target which was divided into four rounds. These discussions form the basis of the presented learnings regarding common denominators and guiding principles for the capacity needs of the Urban SDG.

Target 11.1:
By 2030, ensure **access for all to** adequate, safe and affordable **housing and basic services,**
including the upgrading of slums.

The Right to the City is useful as a starting point for this target. **Effort needs to be directed to access to affordable, adequate and safe serviced land and housing for all, with high priority to the poor, displaced, refugees and migrants.**

The overarching themes discussed in this table were:
- operations of **land and housing markets (both formal and informal)**
  o significant changes in land prices and productivity
- **mobility** and the access to the city
- challenges **within government**
  o lack of financial resources at the local level, silo operation and mono-clustering

Actions needed to achieve this target include:
- **Regulate** the land market
- **Guide the production** of the housing stock
- Generate **funding** with instruments such as **land value capture** (including taxes)
- Stimulate the **participation** of social movements and community-led practices

Indicator 11.1 *Percentage of urban population living in slums or informal settlements.*
A critical issue with the current indicator is the insistence on the slum/non-slum dichotomy, as well as not taking the quality levels of formal settlements into considering.

The capacities needed involve the ability to:

- develop and apply regulatory frameworks for land and housing, dealing with formal and informal land and housing markets simultaneously
- connect actors and stakeholders, involve and work with different backgrounds and experiences
- respond to citizens' rights, and the capacity to engage and include the marginalized
- disaggregate the private sector to small and medium-sized developers, not only focusing on the large players, integrating obligatory and incentive models when working with the private sector
- understand better the logics of upscale markets and its impacts, as well as the opportunities for middle and lower income strata
- improve the willingness to contribute to the costs for development – such as local taxes and user charges - not only sharing the benefits, especially among private sector actors
- involve academia as experts for innovation and to tackle problems between stakeholders
- rank the interest of citizens higher than private investment interests

Target 11.2:
By 2030, **provide access to** safe, affordable, energy-efficient and accessible **transport systems for all people and goods**, improving road safety and **expanding public and non-motorized transport,** with attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations.

The point of departure for meeting this target is the opportunity cost of time spent in transport, as well as moving the focus away from individual motorized transport towards public transport.

The challenges for this target include:
- **time consumption** and **affordability** of transport,
- **attitudes** towards **public transport** and the popularity of car use
- **urban sprawl** as a consequence of individual mobility choices
- inadequate **infrastructures** for public and non-motorized transport

In order to be achieved it requires actions directed towards the:
- design of policies that **integrate** transport systems in order to achieve **efficiency** and improve **affordability** of public transport, considering the impacts on:
  o the access to the city
  o land markets
- development of innovative schemes for **financing** transport investments
- **transformation of the mindset** of mobility choices by:
  o limiting car ownership,
  o creating promotional opportunities for public transport usage
  o facilitating the usage of non-motorized forms of transport
- contextualisation of need for compact cities, **integrating land expansion planning with public transport**
- implementation of **technologically advanced** transport systems

Indicator 11.2 *Percentage of people within 0.5 km of public transit running at least every 20 minutes.*

The current indicator doesn't consider the features of non-motorized forms of transport, such as cyclability and walkability.

This target requires the capacities to:
- foster the **interaction** between the regional and local **level of governance and planning**, and from there, all actors and stakeholders in transport
- to **develop multi-system** (i.e. train, bus, local informal transport, cycle), sustainable, inclusive **plans**, requiring
  o the ability to **interact with stakeholders** and **adjust** strategic planning and implementation according to **local conditions**, challenges and opportunities possibilities
  o the ability to **rethink land use plans** as they tend to segregate uses
- **incorporate the latest insights in technical terms,** including local technologies, for more resource efficiency and less negative environmental impact
- create **policies and creative approaches** in synergy with all stakeholders**, to foster a mindset transformation** towards public transport and safe pedestrian/cycle movement

Target 11.3:
By 2030, achieve more **equitable and efficient**
land use through **participatory
urban and regional planning and management**.

The point of departure chosen for reflecting on this target, was that land is a finite resource, and a public good with a social function – not a commodity. Furthermore, *meaningful* participation is crucial – beyond mere consultation or adhering to a project/legal requirement.

The overarching themes discussed in this table were:
- **creation of a common good**
    - private ownership of land versus city planning
    - social power relations of powerful versus voiceless
    - "long chains" between stakeholders and decision-makers
- **passive participation (following legal requirement)**
    - consultants work short-term without true engagement as a leader, facilitator
    - difference in knowledge level between stakeholders (technicians vs communities)
    - people don't own the process

Actions needed to achieve this target:
- **Link prosperity to planning**; planning as an instrument to create future quality of life
- **Link individuals to the public interest**, awareness of the need for coordination which may be based on central and consensus-based decision making
- Create **common values** for society
- Initiate **participation throughout**, from the pre-planning stage to implementation
- **Ensure continuity** and quality of facilitators, and the frontrunners from within communities
- Create **community communication system** in the local government system
- **Participatory budgeting**

Indicator 11.3 *Ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate at comparable scale*.

A critical point of the current indicator is that the essential and pressing issue of equity is lost in planning, and so is the issue of participation. The indicator solely focuses on a technical measurement of efficiency of land use, and is based on the assumption that the dominant (and Western) concept of compact cities is a universally sustainable approach, while in fact many cities in developing countries rather need to better prepare for ongoing growth.

The capacities needed are the ability to:
- empower local government through (national) legislation and a strategic vision
- interact and synergise between local government and civil society
- create values for partnerships with the private sector
- redistribute opportunities across and within communities
- creating greater synergy in planning, implement small scale and plan for an objective
- co-produce knowledge
- build in support systems for frontliners in participation processes
- enable communities to monitor implementation

Target 11.4:
Strengthen cities' efforts
to protect and promote
cultural and natural heritage.

The point of departure for reflecting on this target was that heritage – cultural and natural – is an asset, rather than a victim, which needs to be protected and conserved. Instead of looking at heritage in a conservative way, our thinking must be directed towards developing, reusing and transforming heritage as an asset. Heritage can be a means of implementation for a wide range of socio-economic purposes.

The overarching themes discussed in this table were:
- **heritage as an asset**
  - economic value opens up various opportunities
  - develop, reuse, transform
  - private heritage "conservation" is becoming more common
  - non-governmental organisations (NGOs) tend to favour conservation only
- attention for both **tangible and intangible** heritage
  - tool for placemaking and role in people's identity

Actions needed to achieve this target:
- **balance** the tension of protection versus development
- **balance** gentrification issues
- **put legal tools in place** to protect heritage efficiently, being not over-restrictive to not hamper development
- manage heritage as **part of urban planning as a whole**
- **monitor economic value** and **translate** emotional value into economic value

Indicator for Goal 11.4 *(1) Percentage of budget provided for maintaining cultural and natural heritage; (2) Number of public libraries per 100,000 people.*
A critical point of the current first indicator is the conservative approach to heritage, and only by the dedicated budget rather than the result, whilst the second indicator seems arbitrary.

The capacities needed are the ability to:
- push forward the understanding of heritage, away from conservation only
- have an opportunity-driven and demand-driven mindset
- address the priorities of others: politics, other sectors such as water, spatial planning, and energy
- work with instruments that monitor economic value, translating the emotional value
- think through issues of gentrification, such as those arising on the surrounding property market or in terms of accessibility to the heritage
- look at an area instead of an object, which can be developed instead of merely protected, and the ability to decide what to preserve and what to let evolve/go
- work productively with global recognition, such as UNESCO's historic urban landscape approach and world heritage status, whereby the position taken may vary between local and national government levels
- involve civil society in protection, raise awareness among stakeholders and communities

Target 11.5:

By 2030**, significantly reduce** the social, health, economic and ecological **risks and impacts of disasters, environmental change and disease outbreaks** by better designing and managing cities, **protecting people in vulnerable situations.**

The point of departure for reflecting on this target was that vulnerability is very much an *urban* issue, as it is the urban areas which concentrate population and activities, which in turn may be placed in vulnerable areas.

The overarching themes discussed in this table were:
- **rapid onset disasters**
  - versus slow reaction in planning, warning systems and responses
- **natural boundaries of disasters**
  - versus artificial/man-made administrative boundaries

Actions needed to achieve this target:
- **establish an umbrella** of sustainable long-term preventative actions and coordination between stakeholders
- **engage in integrated vulnerability management** to respond faster and with greater coordination
- **ensure new institutional arrangements** to overcome the mismatch of natural and administrative boundaries
- incorporate the idea of **"building back better"** at the stage of emergency relief

Indicator 11.5: *(XX per cent of) Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants that are implementing risk reduction and resilience strategies informed by accepted international frameworks (such as forthcoming Hyogo-2 Framework).*

The capacities needed are the ability to:
- ensure synergy both between government levels and within institutions in the form of regulation and policy
- develop preparedness capacity through integration and coordination between actors
- develop preparedness capacity at the scientific/engineering level as well, in the form of knowledge and innovation
- manage disaster risk, including risk mapping
- build awareness and inclusion of civil society through capacity development[7]

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[7] See: Making Cities Resilient Report 2012. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Available: http://www.unisdr.org/files/28240_rcreport.pdf

Target 11.6:

By 2030, **reduce the adverse environmental impacts of cities**, paying special attention to biodiversity loss, air quality, construction materials, and **waste management.**

The point of departure for reflecting on this target was the need to redirect our thinking towards including cities' contribution (i.e. not only their adverse impact) to sustainability, to sectors' complementarity and to an integrated approach.

The overarching themes discussed in this table were:
- **waste disposal could be a cross-cutting entry point** in relation to the other components of air quality, construction material, and water quality
  - consumption patterns at the individual level
  - availability and provision of basic services
  - reduction of waste at source (or production) level
  - infrastructure for solid waste management at the city level
- **biodiversity loss is a challenge at the land use and planning level**
  - loss flora and fauna due to **encroachments** into ecologically precarious areas, as well as water bodies/catchment areas
  - urban expansion, land use change

Actions needed to achieve this target:
- **change** production and consumption **patterns**
- adopt and promote **monetary incentives** for sustainable products and services;
- **localise** production, consumption and waste management;
- adopt and **enforce** waste-related regulations (e.g. reuse, reduce, recycle / circular economy); air pollution control, as well as **huge penalties**
- **include the cost** of reuse into the sales price of commodities
- promote **producer responsibility**
- **scale up** (innovative and successful) initiatives and approaches both from the formal and informal sectors
- **promote** microenterprises (for employment generation)
- **regularise the informal** sector in waste management
- **promote alternative** fuels through regulation, by including incentives for efficient fuels, the use of fuel-efficient transport vehicles

Indicator for Goal 11.6 *Percentage of urban solid waste regularly collected and well managed.*

A difficulty with the current indicator is that it lacks a holistic perspective, that also includes social and economic (employment, informal sector) aspects. Regular collection depends on local conditions, whilst 'well-managed' is not qualified in the current indicator.

The capacities needed are the ability to:
- manage solid waste as a network, both technically and financially
- involve communities, transfer knowledge, skills and technology
- raise awareness, advocate effectively
- implement and enforce regulatory policies
- implement effective monetary incentives for environmentally desirable behaviours
- scale up initiatives and innovations

Target 11.7:
By 2030,
provide, maintain and encourage **access to**
safe, inclusive and multipurpose **public space**.

The point of departure for reflecting on this target was that public space as a concept needs a context-specific definition, rather than ideological conceptualisation, or seeing it as a physical place only. Characteristics of public space are not universal. Likewise, inclusiveness is not universal, even as accessibility is a key characteristic that distinguishes public from purely private space. Public space relates to the right to the city.

The challenges identified for public space include:
- **accessibility** in both **social** and **physical** terms
  - from which tensions arise from increased diversity and privatisation
- different societies have **different needs and understandings** of public space
- **safety and accessibility** differ in meaning, **perception** and measurement per target groups
  - In order for public spaces to be inclusive for some target groups (i.e. women), other target groups may have to be excluded (i.e. men)
- the **political and democratic** importance of some public spaces
- in terms of **funding**, public funding in some societies must be traded off with urgent needs for basic services provision

The actions required for public spaces are:
- The development of a **better understanding of public space** beyond physical terms
  - developing public space **policies complementing other urban policies**
- the institutionalisation of **private funding**, matching public needs
- **co-create** public spaces with stakeholders concerned
- develop public spaces that **accommodate multiple functions and activities**

Indicator 11.7 *Area of public space as a proportion of total city space.*

The current indicator does not cover the issue of accessibility or the distribution of those spaces over the city and lacks understanding of the differences between public spaces in various societies.

The public space target requires the capacity to:
- **facilitate participatory planning** processes, co-creating public spaces with stakeholders
- **realise differences** between types of public spaces, understand their dynamics and know how to **monitor** their development
- **acquaint users** with the concept of public space and their right to it;
- enhance **multifunctionality**
- **integrate** knowledge co-produced with knowledge institutions and multidisciplinary approaches
- manage **innovative financing** schemes
- **consider user diversity** regarding safety and accessibility in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and socio-economic status
- **implement basic public space policies** to complement policies in other fields and balance the privatisation of space
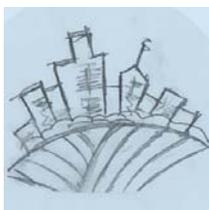
Target 11.a:

Support positive economic, social, and environmental **links between** urban, **peri-urban,** and rural **areas by strengthening** national and regional **development planning.**

The point of departure for reflecting on this target was that the rural-urban dichotomy is no longer useful given the blurring of the lines between the two and the lack of consistent criteria for what is considered urban or rural, even within countries'. Also, development planning in itself cannot be seen as the solution. Despite the wide variety of contexts globally, it is possible to advocate the *type* of policy framework required: participatory, multi-sectorial and multi-level.

The overarching themes discussed in this table were:
- **the peri-urban area** in particular, is a zone of **conflict**
  - inherent to the characteristics of its **land market** and conflicting **regulatory frameworks** (i.e. urban and rural)
  - provision of **infrastructure** versus variable densities in occupation
  - **power imbalance** in peri-urban and "inter-urban" areas versus central areas
- challenges of **"in-between planning"**
  - decentralisation process is still ongoing vs. realisation of need for governance and planning at the regional level
  - lack of communication across/between all levels of government
- **in terms of encroachment, demographic variations require different responses**
  - slowdown in growth, may require to rethink urban sprawl, prepare shrinking
  - vs. ongoing rapid demographic growth, may need anticipatory approaches

Actions needed to achieve this target:
- **use an entry point** that requires integration of implementation in "in-between areas", overcoming hurdles, contextualise, learn. Two suggestions:
  - guiding principles for land markets
  - infrastructure, in the broadest sense for transport, roads, services
- put a **legal framework** for regional planning in place **that ensures sustainability** in terms of the allocation of funds, and is not at the mercy of political winds at the local level
- **improve data collection on demographics, land use in peri-urban areas** to better inform proactive planning, ensure continuity by placing this at the national level
- **establish a multi-municipality level** for actual contextualisation and implementation

Indicator for Goal 11.a Presence of a national urban and human settlements policy framework**.** A critical point of the current indicator is that it appears to be little more than a 'tick box', whilst the quality of the policy framework is not specified.

The capacities needed are the ability to:
- establish a policy framework that is participatory, multi-sectorial and multi-level (government), and ensure the continuity of such a framework
- set values and negotiate with private land owners and the private sector
- guide the flow of funds where priorities or entry points are
- technical capacity in data collection on demographics, land uses
- plan proactively
- contextualise goals, objectives and principles at the heart of notable instruments, when realities on the local level are diverse from international best/learning practices
- experiment with small scale solutions, to tackle issues in specific "in between areas"
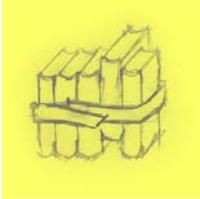
Target 11.b:
By 2020, increase by x% the number of cities and human settlements
adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards
inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change,
resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming
Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels.

The point of departure for reflecting on this target was that the need for integration is a cross-cutting need in all the targets, therefore the question is whether it makes sense to have it as a separate goal. Finally, as every city has different characteristics, it is important to formulate the right entry point for defining _why_ integration is needed.

The themes discussed regarding this target included:
- **fragmentation, silo mentality** in sectorial departments
- inadequacy of existing **governance systems**
  - unable to deal with **adaptive and flexible planning** for complex issues
- difficulty to break **path dependency** and to incorporate feedback while developing policies
- tensions between **long-term and short-term** benefits might pose a threat to the development of integrated plans
- the **formulation of the target** in a way that risk reduction, adaptation and mitigation seem to have prominence over inclusion and resource efficiency

Actions required to achieve this target:
- methods to **work together** between different sectors and departments
- the establishment of spaces for **policy experimentation and knowledge sharing**
- the creation of platforms for **collecting evidence of policy outcomes**
- **monitoring** of integrated policies **through** their **impact** and not through the extent to which they are integrated
  - establish **check and balance systems** for "integrated" proposals seeking funding
  - increase **accountability**

Capacities, mostly needed at the government level are:
- to **manage** the production of **policies and knowledge between different sectors** and to implement integrated, multidisciplinary policies
- **leadership** that balances different stakes, stakeholders and values
- to **experiment** and **share knowledge**
- to collect meaningful **evidence** and monitor **policy impacts**
- to be **held accountable** by independent urban platforms, providing civil society and citizens a crucial role of monitoring process and outcomes
- to **assess through audits** rather than indicators
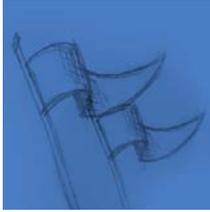
Support national, regional and local governments through financial and technical assistance to **strengthen revenue streams, regulatory and institutional capacity.**

The point of departure for reflecting on this target was that without the necessary resources, governments have limited ability to provide public services and infrastructures, requiring political will as well as the adequate capacities.

Several themes have been identified:

- weakness of **financial** organisation and management in terms of capital and long-term planning
- generation of **adequate financial revenues** for the public sector
  - o overcoming the reluctance to pay taxes because of distrust in government
  - o better communicating the streams of spending and their impact
- weak **accountability** and lack of capacity of civil society to hold governments accountable
- over-bureaucratic structure and **excessive regulation**, limiting rather than facilitating economic growth
- poor **employment conditions** and high staff turnover, may limit effectiveness of capacity development
- limited **networking and knowledge sharing** between organisation and silo mentality
- **discrepancy between capacities** within stronger and weaker municipalities in terms of size and economic opportunities

Actions to address the challenges are:

- make budgets and policies **comprehensively** and **transparent**, linking taxes to spending
- **include citizens in auditing**, strengthening their understanding of government financial regulations and obligations
- **experiment,** innovative funding schemes and access international and national funding
- link **capacity development** to the terms of employment, demonstrating its benefits, in particular, the financial returns
- establish **peer-learning**, good practice **sharing** schemes and build partnerships with **communities** to coordinate promote self-organisation

Indicator 11.c Sub-national government revenues and expenditures as a percentage of general government revenues and expenditures.
Covers only the financial part, without assessing other aspects like institutional capacity.

It requires the capacities to:

- **communicate** taxation and spending
- **access** national and international **funding**: identifying opportunities and proposal writing
- understand the **informal economy**
- create and manage p**artnerships**
- develop new and innovative **terms of employment**

7. Conclusions, next steps: main challenges, actions, stakeholders and the capacities we need

The question remains, what kind of capacities will best meet our complex and unpredictable urban challenges? And then: who needs what capacity? Specialised technical knowledge, the ability to convene different stakeholders, a cross-cutting know-how of the various sectors and how to establish and manage partnerships between them: these are all essential when assessing and developing capacities to deal with urban challenges and opportunities within a city, region or nation. At the same time, a flexibility for these features, e. g. through local learning, adaptation of knowledge to the specific contexts, learning from experimental approaches and different experiences, as well as different ways cities "behave", are essential in urban development and management. Cities differ from each other in every possible aspect. The Urban SDG, with its ambition to be universally applied, hence constitutes the need to diversify implementation.

As we also move away from a clear division of tasks, new capacities need to be integrated in both the private and public sector, equally for the public administration as well as for decision makers, NGOs and citizens. These are all dealing with urban issues to a large extent and need to be able to improve their qualifications and capacities.

Education and capacity development are long-term, yet high-yield investments. The actors involved in sustainable urban development, from governments, to companies and citizens, can put their development in use, bringing sustainable benefits to cities across the globe. Therefore, knowledge institutions need to adapt their programs to the new requirements, establishing multidisciplinary training programs, providing professionals and other active stakeholders with the tools to deal with the urban challenges across the world, while also encouraging creative approaches, responses and solutions.

Establishing better links between urban stakeholders and knowledge institutions can lead to better understand of the challenges and to develop the appropriate capacities to tackle them.

In the context of the discussion on the SDGs and the new global urban agenda, the role of **capacity development** as a powerful tool to accomplish the targets, is highlighted. Academic and education institutions must be able to assist global actors to identify the most important trends and challenges for urban areas and provide them with the right capacities to tackle them. Academia is one of the very few stakeholders that can function as an independent, unbiased actor. Hence it is their role to critically analyse certain policy decisions and motivations. Therefore, research, capacity development and advisory need to go hand in hand, combining the capacity to identify challenges and solutions, to develop training methods and to bring them to the key urban actors.

We, as part of the community of institutions in the field of urban capacity development, want to place ourselves within the global discussion on sustainable urban development. If there is the perceived need to deal prominently and globally with the development of urban areas, then the demand for new capacities to tackle urban challenges and make the best use of urban opportunities is undeniable.

In sum: cities need **synthesisers** and the Urban SDG will not take off without **an integrated approach** to developing the capacities needed for implementation. Also the isolated implementation per target will not necessarily contribute to making cities work better, it is imperative to work across the targets, making them meaningful as a concerted approach. The complexity of urban environments is already leading to the urge to integrate, and greater capacity is required to make this possible.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

(1) End poverty in all its forms everywhere; (2) End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; (3) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; (4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; (5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; (6) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; (7) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; (8) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; (9) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; (10) Reduce inequality within and among countries; **(11) Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;** (12) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; (13) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; (14) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; (15) Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; (16) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; (17) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The Urban Sustainable Development Goal Targets

(11.1) by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums; (11.2) by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons; (11.3) by 2030 enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries; (11.4) strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage; (11.5) by 2030 significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of affected people and decrease by y% the economic losses relative to GDP caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with the focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations; (11.6) by 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality, municipal and other waste management; (11.7) by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities; (11.a) support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning; (11.b) by 2020, increase by x% the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels; (11.c) support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, for sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

As proposed by the United Nations Open Working Group (OWG), in July 2014.
Source: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html