

2014 MEETING OF THE PFD
Session 2.4 - Urbanization and the Global Development Agenda
BACKGROUND NOTE

Between now and 2050, the world's population is projected to grow from around 7bn to 9.3bn people, with the majority of this growth expected in developing countries, particularly in urban areas. Two and half billion new urban dwellers will need access to food, jobs, education, health, new infrastructures (drinking water, sanitation, housing, waste collection, transport and electricity), most of them in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia. Around one billion slum dwellers already live with limited or no access to basic services.

The inclusion of the goal "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" proposed by the United Nations Open Working Group, will be essential for the future of the sustainable development agenda.

Urbanization, if well managed, has an enormous positive transformative power. The agglomeration advantages of densely populated urban areas can promote new patterns of consumption and production, stimulate creativity and innovation, boost economic development, and foster social inclusion.

Homes, communities, towns and cities must be planned, built and renewed in a sustainable way, respecting people's rights and environmental limits. The necessary structures, policies and institutions must be put in place to achieve this. Failing to meet this challenge will have serious repercussions on local communities, living conditions, environmental sustainability, economic development and the governance of our societies. If the issue of rapid urbanization is not prioritized in national and international policy debates and accompanied by adequate policies and resources, the environmental and social costs will be devastating.

Local Governments and CSOs are well positioned to contribute to up-grade slums, find new ways to facilitate the universal access to urban services and economic activities, to foster social inclusion and participatory local governance.

The 'urban opportunity' is being increasingly recognized in international debates and policy forums. The inclusion of an urban goal as one of the focus areas for the post-2015 Agenda is an important step forward in this regard. But the negotiations will continue during the next year. Whether urbanization is included as a stand-alone goal in the agenda or not, it will be vital for the targets and indicators for all goals to be designed in a way that makes them appropriate to drive change and monitor progress in both urban and rural contexts. With regard to EU development policies, up to now, the EC has paid limited specific attention to the issue of urbanization in development cooperation.

Goals OF THE SESSION:

The PFD is the ideal forum to open this debate and to share and assess the priorities and action plans of all stakeholders in this area. It will also be an opportunity to discuss advocacy strategies in the run up to the post-2015 and Habitat III negotiations.

Questions to be covered:

- The place of the urban challenges in the development agenda and in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- How urban challenges are defined in the proposed SDGs
- How to move forward and ensure that urban challenges are adequately addressed by the SDGs and in development policy