

SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Our Future – Turning Ideas into Action




Urban dwellers soon a majority on the globe

In 2006, for the first time in history, the number of people living in the world's cities equals the rural population. And the cities will keep on growing at an unprecedented rate.

Rapid urbanisation brings with it huge challenges – such as growing slum areas, social exclusion and environmental strains - but it also also brings opportunities.

World Urban Forum, held in Vancouver in June 2006, addressed the complexity of urbanisation. 10,000 people from all over the world participated to discuss the future of our cities.

More Urban Less Poor

At WUF3 the book *More Urban – Less Poor* was launched. It is part of Sida's new policy, 'Fighting Poverty in an Urban World' and it places globalisation in a historical, economical and cultural context.

Micro credits for better housing

Half a million people in Central America have been able to improve their homes with micro-loans, initiated by Sida. Two homeowners were invited to Vancouver to share their experiences.

"It is very satisfactory to me to see that I could have an impact on my own life," says Ms. Maria Luisa Zamora from Nicaragua.

Poverty moves into the cities

With this rapid urbanisation, poverty is about to become a primarily urban phenomenon. One billion people live in slum areas and their hardships are enormous. Slum dwellers suffer more from hunger and illness and die younger than other people in cities.



Sida



The third session of World Urban Forum (WUF3) was held in Vancouver, Canada, at the impressive Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre. Situated by the sea, the roof of the exhibition hall is designed to resemble sails. Photo: L. Camara

World Urban Forum

World Urban Forum (WUF), arranged by the United Nations, is held every second year with the objective of discussing one of the most decisive factors for the earth's future – the rapid growth of cities.

Urbanisation is a universal phenomenon that strains both rich and poor countries, but of primary importance are the challenges of urban growth in the developing world.

WUF is not a conference where donors and countries pass resolutions. It is, as the name indicates, a forum and it is open to all. Ministers, city leaders, urban professionals, representatives from grassroots organisations and slum dwellers participate in WUF and each voice counts equally.



Sida displayed its WUF3 activities in an attractive square package. Photo: L. Camara



Sida brought 2,000 red rubber bracelets with the message "Fighting Urban Poverty" to WUF3. They became popular souvenirs and the supply ran out in a few days. Photo: L. Camara

Published by Sida 2006

Division for Urban Development

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Print

Edita Communication AB 2006

The theme of WUF3 was *Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action*. The extensive programme was divided into three sub-themes – 1: Social Inclusion and Cohesion, 2: Partnership and Finance, and 3: Urban Growth and the Environment.

Issues related to these themes are dealt with in different sections of this report. Other parts focus on activities arranged by Sida and its partners, both within the Swedish delegation and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT).

Sida@WUF35

Sida invited a great number of partners to WUF3, from ministers to grassroots representatives. Among many activities, the agency launched a policy on urban development, *Fighting Poverty in an Urban World*, and the book *More Urban Less Poor*.

Housing and Civil Engagement.....12

Poor housing conditions are one of the main obstacles in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A secure and durable home does not only improve the chances of a proper education and a job. It makes people feel included in society.

Sweden@WUF3.....19

A wide range of stakeholders represented Sweden at WUF3: national and local government, authorities, organisations and private companies. They presented their work at a number of networking events and exhibited at the large Swedish exhibition stand.

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The financial capacity of municipalities in the developing world is generally weak, and rapid urbanisation requires new financial solutions. Widespread poverty makes cities less secure, but violence seems to be linked as much to social exclusion and inequality as to poverty in absolute terms.

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As the organiser of WUF, UN-HABITAT played a leading role in Vancouver. UN-HABITAT is currently redefining its position within the UN system. Read the interview with Deputy Executive Director Ms. Inga Björk Klevby.

Urban Growth and the Environment..34

The world's urban population is about to exceed its rural population. City planning is one key issue when dealing with future growth, energy use is another. The energy issue is perhaps the one area where the contradiction between development and environmental issues becomes most obvious.

“Much remains to be done”

30 years after the first UN-HABITAT Conference, 1 billion people still live in slums

In June 2006, some 10,000 people from all over the world came together in Vancouver. Representing more than 100 countries, the delegates had one thing in common: concern about one of the world's most dramatic challenges – the rapid growth of cities.

The fact that the third World Urban Forum (WUF3) was held in Vancouver urges us to reflect upon what has been achieved in terms of improving the lives of the urban poor since 1976, when the same city played host to the very first UN Conference on Human Settlements. At that time, cities were home to one-third of the world's population. Sprawling cities and growing slums were challenges then, as today. But now the situation is so much more appalling. 2006 will mark the year when the earth's urban population equals its rural population. The number of people living in cities increases by about 190,000 every day.

Urbanisation and its impact on humanity is gradually gaining acceptance as one of the most critical fields within international development cooperation. There are enormous needs for assistance, but also a great need among donors for knowledge of how to carry out programmes that are efficient, sustainable and in accordance with the wishes of the urban poor.

The World Urban Forum is the single most important forum for urban experts, from ministers to slum dwellers, to discuss the problems and potentials of urbanisation. At this third World Urban Forum the organizer, UN-HABITAT, explicitly asked participants to present concrete solutions. Sida has worked with urban development for many years and cooperates with partners in different regions in the world. Sida participated in WUF3 and also invited a large number of partners in order to share their practical experiences from different programmes. For instance, our microcredit programmes in Central America have had a huge impact on the housing situation for half a million people in the region. Success stories like these can inspire other urban practitioners to develop similar projects.

Significant to Sida's work in urban development is the multisectoral approach. Stakeholders on all different levels, grassroots organizations, NGOs, municipalities, governments need to be engaged in a broad range of areas. This broad approach is defined in our new pol-

icy on urban development, *Fighting Poverty in an Urban World*, which was launched at WUF3, and it was also reflected in our engagement there. We invited partners with widely different competences within urbanisation, and our many activities covered central aspects of urban development such as waste management, water and sanitation, governance, finance, heritage, housing and urban research.

An important achievement linked to WUF3 was the launch of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN). Sida has been the driving force behind this initiative, which sets the framework for working strategically with improving poor people's right to land and a secure tenure.

Sida was just one of many partners in the Swedish delegation in Vancouver. Many Swedish institutions work progressively with key aspects of urban development, for instance the sustainable city concept. WUF3 has given Sida inspiration to further develop cooperation with them.

This is Sida's report from WUF3. It mixes extracts and insights from presentations, dialogues and networking events with interviews. It has no ambition to cover all the important activities that took place. It is rather a selection of things that Sida observed as interesting. The publication is for both those who were in Vancouver and others who want to learn more about urban development and Sida's commitment to this significant field.

WUF3 was hosted by Mayor Sam Sullivan of Vancouver and Mrs. Anna K. Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT. We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to Canada and UN-HABITAT for arranging the most extensive WUF so far, and to the many skilled professionals from all over the world who participated in Sida's activities and generously shared their thoughts and experiences. Many thanks also to all those Sida partners and delegates who shared their observations from WUF with us. This report is built on their contributions.

Thomas Melin

Head of Division for Urban Development, Sida

Sida invited partners from bottom to top

Sida's presence in Vancouver was highly visible. The agency invited a great number of partners, from ministers to grassroots representatives. The majority of them came from developing countries.



Adolfo J. Chamorro, President, Institute of Housing, Nicaragua, Ernesto Martínez, Executive Director PRODEL, Nicaragua, Malila Chisanga, National Program Officer, Swedish Embassy, Zambia Palmerinda Solís, Homeowner, Guatemala, and Maria Luisa Zamora, Homeowner, Nicaragua. Photo: K. Gossé, A. Stuermer

"There are lots of conferences where the delegates can be described as 'male and pale'. But World Urban Forum is not primarily for donor agencies. We make an effort to invite people from those countries that WUF mainly concerns," says Mr. Thomas Melin, head of the Urban Division at Sida.

In total, almost 150 people were invited by Sida to participate at WUF3. Among those were representatives from partner NGOs, the private sector and also a group of urban development practitioners from around the globe, linked to the International Training Programme on Urban Shelter. Present were also Sida staff stationed in Stockholm and at embassies around the world.

Many Central Americans
Sida's Central American delegation was by far the biggest and also the most diverse. Some 40 people, all with a connection to microfinance, from housing ministers to homeowners checked in to the Century Plaza in Vancouver.

"It is rare that decision makers in

these countries get to speak with the people their decisions concern. Here, politicians, civil servants and others share the same breakfast table. Also, when they are back in their countries, it is much easier to have a dialogue if they have a common reference," says Melin.

The voice of the poor
Mrs. Maria Luisa Zamora, the homeowner invited from Nicaragua, admits that she was very nervous about attending WUF3, wondering how she could possibly fit in. But on the closing day of the forum she was relieved and convinced that her being in Vancouver had made a difference.

"In my country I have no chance to reach through and speak to a minister. It is good that we met here so that people like them can learn from our experience. I really hope that other poor people will get the chance to attend conferences like this and tell their stories."

Ms. Josephine Mwangi-Mweki is employed by the Swedish embassy in Nairobi. She was surprised to find that many organisations in Kenya are doing very innovative

and interesting projects. Another advantage, she thinks, is that WUF3 strengthened her connection to other Sida staff in neighbouring countries.

"Just two months after Vancouver, there was a follow-up meeting at the embassy in Harare, Zimbabwe, to recommend support to the housing sector. We have also discussed future collaborations, like meeting in South Africa sometime next year. There may also be an exchange visit to Central America in 2007."

Capacity building
Although it is impossible to measure the direct outcomes of inviting people to WUF, Melin is convinced that it is an example of long-term capacity building.

"We invite people to these more general kinds of activities. Three or four years later, you find the same people in significant positions in their home countries. It may partly be explained by the fact that they have been exposed to new ideas in an international context." □

International course strengthens urban capacity

28 professionals within the field of urban development were enrolled in a special training course linked to WUF3.

“The aim of the course is to improve the housing conditions in cities. Our participants have positions and duties where they deal with these issues. Hopefully, they will be better equipped to work with challenges they meet,” says Mr. Johnny Åstrand, who is in charge of the International Training Programme in Housing Development & Management (HDM) at Lund University.

For many years the department has provided training opportunities for professionals who work with urban planning in their respective countries. Some 800 people – architects, city planners, civil engineers and economists, mainly from Africa and Latin America – have graduated. All of them were eligible to apply for the training session ‘Urban Shelter – Design and Development’.

“I was overwhelmed by the interest; 150 people applied. We have prioritised applicants who are currently

involved in the process of change in their home organisations.”

Before coming to Vancouver, the participants were asked to do a shelter analysis of their country and focus on a specific problem. After WUF3 they wrote a 15-page report, making a proposal for its improvement. The papers will be collected in a book, to be published by HDM.

“ITP is an enormously good channel for development aid. It is an international exchange where participants meet others who work with similar issues.”

The training session linked to WUF3 is considerably shorter than the normal courses held in Lund, but it has other advantages.

“By inviting them to Vancouver they will become better ambassadors for urban issues and learn more about Sweden and Swedish development aid. I hope it will make them more inclined to address the Swedish Embassy in their country with ideas for improving conditions in their cities,” says Åstrand. □



Photo: K. Gossé

Facts ITP

Each year Sida conducts around 70 International Training Programmes (ITP). The aim is to contribute to capacity development and the change process in partner countries and other developing countries. Training programmes target experienced executives in middle and top management positions within their respective organisations. Sida provides ITPs in areas such as trade and industry, democracy and human rights, and environment and infrastructure.

www.sida.se

Sida T-shirt caught in security check

Sida staff at WUF3 could easily be spotted by their black T-shirts with the message ‘Fighting Urban Poverty’. The idea was that that the outfits should appear a bit street-wise. But the message was slightly over-interpreted, at least by the security guards at the entrance to the conference hall. When searching through a bag belonging to one of

the Sida delegates, the guards became suspicious about the T-shirt. Could this ‘fighting’ indicate a risk to the security in the conference hall? Consequently, the garment was confiscated. It was handed back to the owner the following day, without any further inquiries or explanations. □



ITP course led to Tsunami mission



Mr. Paul Makasa, Lecturer in Architecture at the Copperbelt University in Kitwe, Zambia, attended WUF3 as one of the participants in the International Training Programme 'Urban Shelter Design and Development'.

Why were you involved in the rebuilding of Banda Aceh Province in Indonesia?

"It was shortly after I had attended a course in Costa Rica, run by FUPROVI and the Housing and Urban Development Department of Lund University. During

that course I designed a building manual which interested the people at UN-HABITAT Emergency Response to the Tsunami Reconstruction (ERTR)."

What was the idea behind your building manual?

"I noticed that in developing countries, especially in Zambia, the majority of houses are built by individuals on a self-help basis, using available human, material and capital resources. I therefore started thinking what would happen if these people were to be organised, and their synergies brought together. How much of the housing problem would they solve? That was my design approach."

What was your particular mission in Banda Aceh?

"I was assigned to Simeulue Island, the epicentre of the earthquake and the island which bore the brunt of the Tsunami. I spent six months as a UN volunteer and gave technical assistance to the

District Manager and his design team in developing earthquake-resistant, low-cost housing. I was also involved in mobilising communities in self-help housing and teaching them appropriate construction techniques."

Has the ITP been useful to you in any other ways?

"In 1997, I did a postgraduate course in Housing Development and Management at Lund University. Upon my return, I was appointed Head of Architecture, and taught a course in Housing Policies and Economics for Developing Nations. It was taught at final year to all students in the School of the Built Environment (SBE) and we also had students from Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Malawi. Both this and the assistance I gave in Indonesia are clear South-to-South knowledge and technology transfer. Sida, which financed both my courses, may not realise how the seeds it plants in us get extrapolated across the globe." □

Lack of housing leads to social exclusion

The Swedish NGO 'Jagvillhabostad.nu' (I want housing now) sent three representatives to WUF3.

"We wanted to exchange experiences with other young people on how we can make an impact on the housing market. Our organisation has been quite successful in raising housing issues on the media agenda, conducting campaigns and lobbying among politicians," says Ms. Sofia Larsson.

The supply of affordable housing for young people is a real problem in Swedish cities. Ms. Larsson notices that the lack of a long-term place to stay has a similar impact on people, regardless of whether they live in rich or poor countries.

"Obviously, a slum area in Tanzania is worse than a second-hand contract in a cellar in Gothenburg, but in both cases it leads to social exclusion. People without a proper place to stay are less inclined to engage themselves in society. The home is a platform for community involvement." □

Vulnerable groups most affected by climate change

Industrial countries are mainly responsible for global warming. But the people most likely to face the risks caused by climate change live in cities in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Whether an adaption to these risks and lower greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved without damaging cities' economic prospects, was discussed at the networking event 'Climate Change and Cities in the South', arranged by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Sida.

Reducing the vulnerability among people who risk being affected by floods was another issue raised at the event. The audience agreed on the importance of engaging those at risk in decision making processes so that they themselves can contribute to increasing their safety.

Sida launches policy on urban development

A new eight-page document is the guiding star for Sida's efforts to fight urban poverty.



The policy is called *Fighting Poverty in an Urban World* and has the overall objective "to promote the development of sustainable cities where all citizens have opportunities to improve their living conditions."

It has a strong poor people's perspective and describes the severe situation for many people in the

world's cities. The policy states that too little recognition has been given, not only to the problems, but also to the potentials of cities. Urban areas are engines of economic development and in order to promote national poverty prevention and alleviation, the situation in cities has to be addressed. The fact that Sida is launching a specific policy on urban development gives extra weight to these issues.

"A policy cannot be ignored. It will help intensify the dialogue with partners about the need for including an urban dimension in poverty analysis," says Mr. Thomas Melin, head of Sida's Urban Division.

The policy as such does not entail any dramatic changes as to how Sida will deal with urban development. Rather, it emphasises what has prevailed for a long time.

"The policy describes the complexity of urbanisation and the need for a multi-sectoral approach. It also highlights the importance of working at different levels. To achieve results, you cannot only work with government. You have to involve private sector, local government, Non-Governmental Organisations and Community-Based Organisations."

Urbanisation is often associated with the so-called mega cities. In reality, the main population growth is taking place in small and medium-sized urban areas. This is where Sida's support shall be focused.

"We have not defined where Sida will work, only that we recognise the vast needs in these kind of cities," adds Melin. □

New book shows the potential in growing cities

The massive urbanisation that the world is undergoing is not possible to break, nor is it desirable to do so. These are two of the main premises of 'More Urban – Less Poor'.

The book outlines the causes and effects of the rapid growth of cities. Unlike the public debate, which often blames urbanisation itself for the misery in cities, the book is much more positive.

"Urbanisation has lead to increased poverty, but it can be overcome. This is what the book is all about," says Mr. Göran Tannerfeldt, one of the co-authors.

The book is based on international urban research and it highlights the links between urbanisation and



Thomas Melin, head of the Urban Division at Sida, holds a copy of *More Urban – Less Poor* at the book launch, which drew around 100 people to the Swedish exhibition stand in Vancouver.

Photo: L. Camara

economic development. Cities are regarded as engines of growth. With good governance, pro-poor policies and a political will, urbanisation will lead to a better life for both urban and rural populations.

The book has been produced by Sida as background reading for the new policy on urban development. For the first time in launch-

ing a book, the donor agency has cooperated with a publishing house, London-based Earthscan. By doing so, Sida hopes to give the book maximum circulation. *More Urban – Less Poor* was Earthscan's second best selling book at WUF3 after UN-HABITAT's *State of the World's Cities 2006/7*. The book can be purchased at www.earthscan.co.uk □

Poor links between research and reality

Sida calls for stronger bonds between urban researchers and development workers

Urban research is too fragmented and poorly linked to the development agenda. With this in mind, Sida convened a meeting in Vancouver to discuss new ideas to promote research cooperation and networking.

Some 40 people – representatives from universities, researchers, donor organisations and practitioners – attended the meeting, which focused on the weak connection between urban research and reality.

“A lot of money is being spent on urban research, but it does not make a sufficient contribution to capacity building for practical development work in the third world,” Mr. Henrik Nolmark claims.

On behalf of Sida, he is investigating new ways to strengthen urban research. Today it is characterised by several flaws; there is little cooperation among donor organisations, universities exchange too little knowledge, and applied field-based research is relatively rare.

The meeting in Vancouver was one important step towards presenting new ways of organising urban research. It has less to do with research topics and more to do with support structures and organisation of research, Nolmark explains.

“We want to move away from the linear way of thinking; that researchers produce knowledge that should be used by practitioners. Instead, we imagine some kind of

platform for cooperation where researchers, practitioners and policymakers work together.”

Sida has far-reaching plans to establish contacts with specific cities and regions for cooperation on the future of urban research.

“In order for urban research to have relevance it is important for local authorities to be involved at an early stage, and also when the research question is about to be formulated,” says Nolmark.

In May 2007, Sida will take part in the fourth Urban Research Symposium in Washington and plans to

“Applied field-based research is relatively rare.”

present a proposal on how different stakeholders can work together. Sida has invited other donor organisations and researchers to take part in the development of the proposal.

“It is important to get a better overview of research that is being conducted and we are eager to establish a network of universities and research institutes in both the North and the South. Another possible alternative could be to suggest the creation of a secretariat, so that financiers can cooperate and concentrate on some common research areas.” □



Gapminder makes sense of statistics

How do you make sense of facts and figures, such as estimates of urban population growth?

By using simple graphics, according to the Stockholm-based foundation, Gapminder..

A video produced by Gapminder in cooperation with UN-HABITAT was shown at WUF3. It illustrated the rapid growth of humanity, from 6 billion people today to a future 9 billion. The video raised the question of where this additional 3 billion people will live – in slums or elsewhere?

Gapminder is a non-profit venture and its motto, ‘Making sense of the world by having fun with statistics!’ has proved to be successful. The foundation has developed software that makes statistics more accessible. Its founder, Professor Hans Rosling, says the graphics often give a different picture of the state of things than one expects.

“People do not know what the world looks like. We provide a conception of the world that is based on facts.”

Gapminder is a free online facility. You can look into a number of different parameters and see how well your country is performing. There is also a graph showing the achievements made to reach the Millennium Development Goals. The video shown at WUF3 will also be available on Gapminder’s site, www.gapminder.org □

Cultural heritage supports urban development

Cultural heritage is an underestimated resource for poverty alleviation and promotion of sustainable city development.

Among the rich array of activities dealing with urban poverty, one networking event jointly arranged by Sida and The Swedish National Heritage Board focused on a slightly neglected aspect – cultural heritage.

“To combat poverty, economic development is crucial, but in order to create sustainable development, you need a multi-dimensional approach. Cultural heritage is one such asset that can lead to an increased liveability,” says Ms. Kersti Berggren of the Swedish National Heritage Board.

The character of heritage as a development resource is that it gives rise to cultural as well as economic value. A society that uses heritage as an asset in poverty alleviation and urban development will gain a multiple economic effect, in contrast to societies that focus strictly on financial matters. It will also have a greater chance of reaching a higher degree of social inclusion.

Cultural heritage is increasingly recognised, not least through UNESCO and its World Heritage List. The tourist industry has realised the economic potential of caring for historically interesting environments – beautiful as well as horrifying heritage sites attract people who come to visit and spend their money.

The networking event took the discussion further and stressed that culture and cultural heritage are not separate parts of society that you add to your everyday life.

They are horizontal components that permeate the whole community.

“Cultural heritage does not have to represent the beautiful or the good. The worst thing that could happen is denial,” says Berggren.

“The conflicts in the Balkans and Iraq over-explicitly show the importance of cultural heritage. When people fight, they strike against the cultural heritage of the enemy. It is an efficient method of causing aggression,” says Berggren.

For the very same reason, the reconstruction of cultural heritage plays a key role in reconciliation processes. (See separate article)

In a less dramatic context, cultural heritage is pivotal in the everyday life of any society. It provides references to the past, which people need in order to deal both with the present and the future. The networking event stressed that ordinary people have to be involved in defining what cultural heritage is. And the key note speaker, Professor Dipesh Chakrabarty, raised the question of how you come to terms with historical wounds when there is a general inclination to erase the heritage that is associated with dark sides of history. □

Read more about Sida's support to Cultural Heritage in Caring for the Historic Environment, www.sida.se/publications.





Zanzibar Stonetown Photo: C. Östlund

Historical symbols may unite a divided city

Cultural Heritage without Borders receives support from Sida to assist in the reconstruction of war-torn Prizren, Kosovo.

In times of war, the symbolic attraction of cultural heritage increases. Prizren in Kosovo has painful experience of this. The town used to be the embodiment of multiculturalism; Albanians, Serbs and Turks lived side by side and a true inhabitant of Prizren spoke three languages. The harmony in the populace was completely distorted during the Balkan wars and conflicts in the 1990s, when political opportunists and nationalists managed to pit the ethnic groups against each other.

“The old buildings used to be everybody’s symbols. Regardless of ethnic origin, people collectively cared for the old Turkish baths and the Byzantine churches. When the war began, the different ethnic groups started to attack each other’s symbols, such as the baths and mosques. It made no difference if a church was built in the

13th century or if it was a concrete replica from the 1990s,” says Mr. Dick Sandberg, Head of Office for Cultural Heritage without Borders in Prishtina.

In 2005, Cultural Heritage without Borders was assigned to coordinate the rebuilding of the Serbian quarters of Nenkalaja/Podkalaja in the historical town centre. The restoration of the cultural heritage there is not only a vehicle for economic development; it is also a catalyst for democratisation and reconciliation after the deep-rooted conflict. The goal is that the Serbs who fled the town will return and reintegrate with the community. The project has strong participatory elements; the municipality, local NGOs and Serbian representatives are all involved in the reconstruction of the town.

“My vision of the future is that three languages shall be spoken in the town again. When you look at the actual reconstruction of houses we have not come far at all, but psychologically we have achieved a lot,” says Sandberg. □



Ethnic conflicts resulted in the Serbs leaving Prizren. The reconstruction of the historical part of the town has now become a tool for reconciliation. Photo: D. Sandberg

“People are the real experts”

Text: Kerstin Gossé

Grassroots organisations gave numerous examples of how people closest to the problems have been transformed from targets to agents, finding solutions to their own problems.

The ability to choose and prioritise is brought to the fore at a conference like World Urban Forum. During five hectic days the participants were served a smorgasbord of dialogues, roundtables and some 160 networking events, many of them taking place simultaneously.

In order to make the most of this unique opportunity to learn from discussions and best practices, some 80 people invited to WUF3 by Sida were asked to write summaries of activities that they participated in. These 300-odd ‘testimonials’ from WUF make interesting reading, not least because they disclose that a number of words and concepts crop up considerably more frequently than others. Among these are ‘people’s participation’, ‘public engagement’ and ‘empowerment’.

People must be consulted
This is by no means a coincidence, but an illustration of a paradigm shift, from top-down to bottom-up, that has gradually gained ground. In all areas of development cooperation, it is now understood that any initiative is bound to fail or be short-lived unless the beneficiaries have been consulted. No visitors to WUF3 could avoid hearing the frequently repeated message ‘People are the real experts’.

Urban development is a complex

field. WUF3 dealt with the most central preoccupations of urbanisation, such as the need for better housing, new financial solutions, increased safety and security, and the environmental challenges of rapidly growing cities. The importance of engaging the public is relevant to all these areas. In Vancouver, civil engagement was primarily discussed in relation to slum upgrading and affordable housing. These two challenges are

“Slums are not a natural consequence of urbanisation, but a product of bad governance and a lack of resources and grassroots pro-poor perspectives.”

so vital for the global development agenda that they have been addressed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as ‘Cities without Slums’ (goal 7, target 11). The strong link between public engagement and housing is logical. Poor people without secure tenure become marginalised and excluded from society, whereas those with a decent and steady place to stay have a platform to improve their overall life situation; employment, education, health, gender equality and much more.

Achieving the MDGs

The specific objective of ‘Cities without Slums’ is to “significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020”. It is a modest ambition, considering that the number of slum dwellers has increased by a further 200 million since the MDGs were launched. Still, recognising slums as a prioritised area is an important

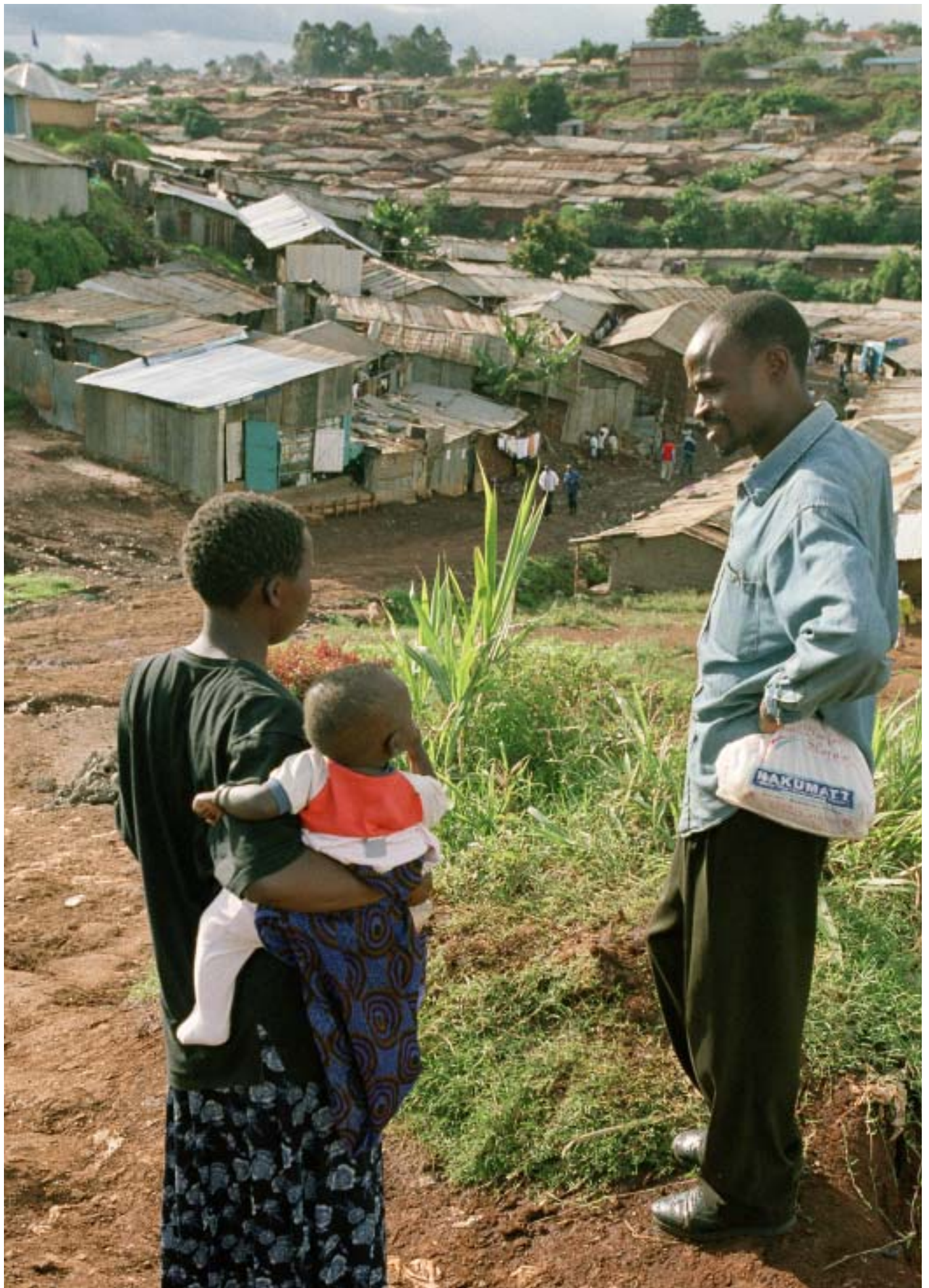
achievement. It proves that world leaders admit that slums are not a natural consequence of urbanisation, but a product of bad governance paired with a lack of resources and grassroots pro-poor perspectives. A considerable amount of criticism was also raised at WUF3 as to how little the international community has done to improve the situation of the urban poor.

Ms. Lindiwe Sisulu, South Africa’s

Minister of Housing, spoke about a growing impatience among the poor. Another keynote speaker, Mr. Jockin Arputham, from the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India, articulated his frustration. “There has been 30 years of talk. The number of conferences, papers and seminars is increasing and so is poverty in the developing world. The experts teach and tell us what we should do to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, but it must be the people’s efforts, not the experts.”

Forced evictions

The most brutal consequences of insecure tenure were highlighted by Mr. Miloon Kothari, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing. He gave a gloomy picture of the situation of the most vulnerable group – people who are unwelcome squatters in their own cities. “During the last 30 years, forced eviction has



African cities grow enormously and the inequalities between the rich and the poor are indescribable. Slum areas like Kibera in Nairobi are therefore referred to as cities within the city. Photo: M. Rosshagen

increased and there is growing land and property speculation. There are displaced people all over the world and no consultation with the dwellers, no alternative, and no human rights impact. This is a mockery of the Millennium Goals," he said, calling for an end to forced evictions.

Grassroots gain ground

It would have been easy to get stuck there, in the immense challenges of urban growth and deteriorat-

important aspect is to decentralise governance to the lowest possible level. The main obstacles today are that municipalities in the developing world lack financial resources and power. They rely heavily on financial means from central governments, which by tradition interfere with local concerns. For a long time Sida has supported the decentralisation of power and finance. In this regard, the Swedish municipal system serves as a model. The strong

burg, Sweden. Six teams consisting of ordinary citizens and experts have made joint proposals for how they envisage the area in the future.

Strömberg made no secret of the challenges that lie ahead now that the civic opinions and the views of professional city planners are being matched. The latter are not used to receiving views from the public before the programming and planning is completed. And there is a tendency among professionals to say that they know best.

"The proposals made by the citizens are not necessarily better," admits Strömberg. "The important outcome of involving the public is that the trust between civilians and politicians stands the chance to increase. People feel included and gain a sense of ownership." He emphasises that it is essential that civic participants are met with respect from the decision makers, otherwise there can be a strong and counterproductive reaction.

A democratic platform

At times WUF is criticised for lacking the mandate to make decisions or put pressure on governments. But its strength lies in the prestigeless sharing of ideas, successes and failures. Most importantly, the whole spectrum of people is gathered in one common arena. Each voice can be heard – from ministers and UN officers to practitioners, grassroots representatives and occasionally people who have personal experience of what WUF is all about; improving the lives of the urban poor.

Mrs. Maria Luisa Zamora from

"The proposals made by the citizens are not necessarily better, but people feel included and gain a sense of ownership."

ing conditions for an increasing number of slum dwellers. Still, WUF3 managed to balance frustration with hope. Grassroots organisations such as Slum Dwellers International, its South African affiliate, Federation of the Urban and the Rural Poor (FEDUP), and Grassroots Organisations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) were visible in Vancouver. Only when large masses are mobilised is there a realistic chance to achieve the MDGs. Their straightforward, proactive messages were greeted with rounds of applause from the audience.

Another important step towards attaining the goals was the launching of the Sida-supported *Global Land Tool Network* (GLTN). The initiative is an attempt to strategically work on improving the right to land and secure tenure. The GLTN will be a forum for collective knowledge on land management issues and will support networks on a global scale.

Localising the MDGs

The challenges of urbanisation may look alike, but not the solutions. WUF3 addressed the importance of localising the Millennium Development agenda. An

position of the municipalities is also unique in comparison with other Western countries.

The need for community engagement is undisputed, but there is a risk that all the talk of people's participation remains empty rhetoric. WUF3 recognised the difficulties, not least in different networking events, where the challenges were addressed. How do you achieve inclusive governance and decentralise decision-making processes? And how do you make people feel that the development of their city is a common concern?

The 'Local Leadership and Community Involvement' networking event stressed the importance of responsible leadership. One of the speakers, Mr. Knut Strömberg, Professor in Urban Design, is involved in an ongoing renewal of an inner city harbour area in Gothen-

Facts: Slums

UN-HABITAT's definition of a slum is 'a settlement in an urban area in which more than half of the inhabitants live in inadequate housing and lack basic services'.

A slum household is one which lacks one or more of the following criteria: durable housing, secure tenure, sufficient living area, and access to clean water and sanitation. Source: *State of the World's Cities 2006/7*



Photo: K.Roberts

Nicaragua came to Vancouver to share her most personal experiences from a Sida-supported microfinance programme. Like millions of other poor people, she had abandoned life in the countryside to seek a better life in the city. By making this choice, she hoped to increase her children's chances of obtaining a proper education. The family settled down on an inherited plot. The house was in a poor condition and she had no means to plan for more than a day ahead. Today, nine years later, she has taken a few loans and

gradually improved her home. She has set up a small business, baking tortillas. Next year her son will graduate as an engineer and her younger daughter is next in line for university studies. "It is very satisfying to me to see that I can make an impact on my own life. I am happy to be here to share my experiences, not only of improving my home, but of the whole process. From the time I took my first loan to this day, my understanding of the world has gradually increased."

This story illustrates both problems and potentials with urbanisation: the attraction of cities, the difficulties people meet there, and how important a proper home is for becoming a fully included member of society with rights and responsibilities. Her story gives meaning to somewhat abstract expressions such as civil engagement, the empowerment of women and participation. Success stories like Maria Luisa's do not simplify the difficulties in achieving the MDGs, but they prove that efforts that are being made are worthwhile. □

The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Goal 1:

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2:

Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce under-five mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat diseases including HIV/AIDS and malaria

Goal 7:

Ensure Environmental sustainability

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources

Target 10: By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

Target 11: Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

www.un.org/millenniumgoals



Photo: M. Atterhög

“Poor people do not want things for free”

Microcredits enable households to improve their lives

Sida's low-income housing programmes in Central America received a lot of attention at WUF3. So far more than 120,000 families have received loans to build or to improve their homes.

The networking event 'A Successful Concept' demonstrated how innovative financial schemes can assist poor people to gradually improve, rebuild or construct houses with small loans and technical assistance. The outcomes of two decades of Sida-supported low-income housing programmes in the region are impressive.

“In my country, 40,000 poor families in slum areas have improved their housing conditions through innovative financial

“98 percent of the households pay back their loans.”

schemes, including microfinance. I think this is one of the most successful technical and financial supports that have been implemented in Costa Rica,” says Mr. Fernando Zumbado, Minister of Housing and Poverty Eradication in Costa Rica.

The combination in his portfolio illustrates very well the close connection between a decent place to live and poor people's chances to improve their overall living conditions. The minister's overwhelmingly positive attitude to the Sida-initiated



Maria Luisa Zamora is a typical client. She makes a living from baking tortillas, sewing clothes and selling beverages. Her husband works as a night watchman. Photo: E. Felix

support might be dismissed as a natural effect of a recipient's dependence on a donor. But in fact, the low-income housing credit programme that he refers to has not received any additional financial resources from Sida since 1995. And Zumbado proudly speaks of the strong public support and the financial and institutional sustainability of the programmes that Sweden helped to build.

The Sida-supported housing programmes run in five countries in Central America; FUPROVI in Costa Rica, FDLG in Guatemala, PRODEL in Nicaragua, FUNDEVI in Honduras and FUSAI in El Salvador. Their design varies but they all confront a deeply rooted perception that says that poor people cannot afford to take a loan to improve their living conditions.

Sida has supported the building and strengthening of institutions that provide technical and finan-

cial assistance. A prerequisite is that the country itself makes a contribution. The central government, local authorities, NGOs, the private sector and not least the households themselves need to be involved. Since its inception in Costa Rica in 1987, Sida has invested \$56 million in low-income housing programmes in the region. Local and national governments have, in total, almost doubled this amount with an additional \$100 million.



“Improved living conditions and empowerment go hand in hand. People learn how to manage resources and their self-esteem increases,” says Alfredo Stein. Photo K. Gossé.

“People know that they receive a loan and not a subsidy. It creates more responsibility and 98 percent of the households pay back their loans. That money is reinvested as new loans for other poor families in the region,” says Mr. Alfredo Stein.

for free. But with a little technical and financial assistance, in a short period of time they can substantially improve their homes and also their incomes, as many houses are also workplaces where women sew clothes and make food to sell,” Stein explains.

“Since the homeowners receive loans and not grants, money circulates and is reinvested as new loans to help other poor families in the region.”

He has worked as a consultant for Sida’s housing improvement microcredit programmes for more than 15 years and is now pursuing a PhD at Lund University on how low-income housing programmes can help to reduce urban poverty. Stein notices a tendency among certain donor agencies to rely too much on their own references and schemes when designing slum upgrading programmes. They forget that most people in the developing world lack the financial means to construct a completely new house, but gradually improve what they have according to their resources.

Sida builds on this tradition of incremental housing process. People receive successive small loans over short periods of time and gradually transform their homes. Also, the members of the household participate in the process of decision making and, together with the professionals who give technical assistance, ask questions like: What do we need to improve? Why? When? How much will it cost?

“Poor people do not want things

The microcredit model was illustrated in a film, which was broadcast at the Swedish exhibition stand. The loan-taking women who appear in the film – Mrs Maria Luisa Zamora from Nicaragua and Mrs. Palmerinda Solis from Guatemala – were invited to Vancouver to share their experiences.

“We are poor people with no steady income, but with a loan that is guaranteed by a solidarity group from our own community my husband and me managed to improve our home. I am here in Vancouver to motivate other people to work hard for better living conditions,” says Solis. □

Banks reluctant to lend to low-income customers

In order for microfinance programmes to be sustainable and reach large populations, it is crucial to involve banks in most countries.

“We need to change the culture of the banks – make them downscale their approach so that small businesses and average families can also benefit from them,” says Mr. Edgar R Búcaro.

He used to work with microfinance programmes in Guatemala. Recently, he was appointed as bank manager in the commercial sector and was able to bring his vision of loans for the average man to life. Before travelling to Vancouver he approved his first 25 loans for micro-enterprises. Over the next three years an estimated 25,000 families will receive loans from his bank to improve their homes.

The demand for better housing is enormous in Guatemala, Búcaro explains. One million people out of the 6.5 million in the country urgently need improved housing. Sida encourages the effort to help low-income families and has invested \$2 million in the project.

“Until banks realise that they can make a profit, they are afraid to lend to poor people. In an initial phase, Sida therefore supports the initiative with seed capital,” says Mr. Per Fröberg of the Urban Division. □

Facts: Microcredits

Microloan is a complement to low-income families’ own efforts to improve their living conditions. A typical client earns \$2 a day or less. The average loan amounts to \$800 and is paid back within 18-36 months. In order for families to have the means to repay it, the loan should not exceed 20 percent of the total monthly family income.

The Sida-supported housing programmes have so far reached around 6 percent of the urban population in five Central American countries. About 60 percent of the loan-takers are women.

Small steps trigger civic engagement

What has a cash withdrawal machine got to do with people's participation? Judging by two participatory projects in Sweden and South Africa, a great deal.

At first glance two suburbs, one in Gothenburg and the other in Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, have very little in common. But the 'Leadership and Community Involvement in Local Governance' networking event illustrated that both, in similar ways, have managed to transform segregated and socially excluded areas into much more livable places, where the inhabitants have involved themselves in the process.

People-centered approach

The methods used build on decentralisation of the decision-making process. Ms. Stina Fransson, who managed the project in Gårdsten, outside of Gothenburg, mentioned three criteria necessary for people to even consider getting involved. "The invitation to cooperate must be real. It has to be important, it has to be possible and it must be open to all."

Ms. Dawn McCarthy described the people-centred approach that her team has used in Nelson Mandela Bay. The inhabitants there were asked what kind of improvements they would like to see in the neighbourhood. One of the first things that came up was the need for a cash withdrawal machine. At that time, people had to walk long distances in order to withdraw

money. The same was true for the people in Gårdsten, but no bank was keen on an investment like that in the area. Fransson explains that the cash withdrawal machine held a huge symbolic meaning. After some years, when it was finally installed, it proved to people that somebody had seriously listened to their voices.

People are busy

Marginalised groups, whether in Sweden or in South Africa, have little confidence in democratic processes. The event concluded that leadership must be long-term, strong and it should not underestimate the importance of showing small, concrete results.

"People in low-income communities are incredibly busy. They want to do things that are worthwhile.

The same thing goes for children. They hate to do things just for the sake of it. It must be relevant," said the moderator, Ms. Wendy Sarkisian.

Another participatory project, Child Friendly District in Vietnam, was presented at the event. It aims to create the best possible environment for children in District 4, Ho Chi Minh City, by involving them in its development process. Children have been trained in life skills and how to make their voices heard. Mr. Vo Phi Chau, the coordinator of the project, said that today, just a few years from the start, the children in the district are more confident. For instance, they dare to complain about disturbances in their environment, like noise from karaoke bars. □



The participatory elements were strong when Gårdsten, outside Gothenburg, Sweden, got its facelift. Even school children were asked to come up with suggestions, for instance how to make the big green area in the neighbourhood a more attractive place. Photo: Christer Ehrling

Facts

- Gårdstens Bostäder which managed the transformation of Gårdsten District outside Gothenburg received the World Habitat Award 2005.

- The town planning methodology used in the Sustainable Communities project in Nelson Mandela Bay won the World Leadership Forum's World Leadership Award for the Best Town Planning Project in 2005.

- Child Friendly District in Ho Chi Minh City will be selected as an example of best practice in State of the World, Urban Planet 2007.

Joint effort behind Sweden at WUF3

The Swedish delegation in Vancouver was a cooperation among many different stakeholders.

“Quite soon an overwhelming share of the world’s population will live in cities. All measures against poverty and unhealthy environments require a joint effort. Therefore, it is important that the world’s nations gather to discuss how to tackle the problems,” says Mr. Rolf Lindell, the WUF3 coordinator at the Ministry for Sustainable Development.

Lindell thinks that WUF has become an important arena for discussions about city planning and urban development.

“Conditions for the urban population are alarming in many countries. Sweden has expertise and companies that can help improve the situation. For instance, our ef-



To pay a tribute to the ice hockey nation Canada, the Swedish delegation wore hockey shirts in the Swedish exhibition stand. Photo: L. Camara

orts to create sustainable cities and reduce the dependence on oil can be a model for others. As for creating social communities and meeting points, Sweden has much to learn from solutions that have been developed in other countries.”

The Swedish delegation was led by Mr. Mårten Lilja, Secretary of State, and there were representatives from authorities, local governments, municipalities, organisations and private companies. They had the opportunity to present their

work in a number of networking events and all had a presence at the Swedish exhibition.

“It was primarily a cooperation between the ministry and bvg-Sida and it worked very well. We wanted to create an open and welcoming atmosphere and the stand became a natural meeting point for participants at WUF3, not only from Sweden but in general,” says Lindell. □

Sweden returns totem pole

While WUF3 took place, the National Aboriginal Day, 21 June, was celebrated in Canada. This year, the celebration in Vancouver had a special connection to Sweden. After 77 years in Swedish custody, a nine-metre totem pole was officially returned to the Haisla people. The handover took place at a ceremony outside the Art Gallery of Vancouver.

The artefact originates from the 1870s and has been kept by The Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm since 1929. In 1994 the Swedish government decided that the totem pole should be returned to Canada.

In March 2006, it finally embarked



Photo: T. Thörnquist

on its journey across the Atlantic by ship. After the official welcoming ceremony in Vancouver, the totem pole was taken to its original home, Kitamaat, 200 kilometres north of Vancouver, where it is now kept in a community centre.

The Haisla people have given the Museum of Ethnography a copy of the pole, which was carved by the grandchild of the original totem pole’s maker. □

Chalmers teams up with UN-HABITAT

Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg has become a HABITAT Partner University.

"This builds on a mutual interest. We will primarily work with capacity building and exchanges of students, staff and services," says Professor Björn Malbert.

"The overall goal is to promote sustainable development. Chalmers will work as a node in Swedish and international networks. For instance, we expect an increased cooperation with partners in the developing world," says Mr. Lars Reuterswärd, Director of the Global Division, UN-HABITAT.

The cooperation between UN-HABITAT, Chalmers in Gothenburg and also Helsinki Univer-

sity of Technology was officially launched at WUF3.

One part of the cooperation will be about establishing exchange possibilities for master's students within the field of urban development. And it is by no means a one-way flow of ideas from the North to the South.

Consumption too high

"The climate issue is critical and Sweden also has enormous problems to tackle. We consume far too many resources and need to change our way of thinking. In this regard, students from the developing world can help us look for alternative solutions," says Malbert.

UN-HABITAT has already cooperated with one branch at Chalmers. Students in the Design for Sustain-

able Development master's programme have conducted fieldwork in the Lake Victoria district. As a HABITAT Partner University, the whole university will benefit. One aim is that students in all international master's programmes at Chalmers will be eligible to apply for an exchange semester.

There are other positive effects of establishing a formal cooperation with UN-HABITAT, adds Malbert.

"We will gain access to each other's networks and resources. There is potential for the exchange of staff and services. From time to time, UN-HABITAT asks us to do consulting assignments. As partners, the procedure to find and appoint the right competence will be easier." □

Students design in relation to different cultures

Among the exhibits on the Swedish stand was a model of a five-block building. At first glance looking very much like any residential block, it proved to be a vision of vertical farming.

The model was designed by Ms. Georgia Nowak, an exchange student in a one-year programme, EducationHealthHousing, which aims to give architecture students the skills to work in other parts of the world.

"The idea is that students should present architectural ideas that go beyond what we see today," says Mr. Dan Johansson, lecturer in Architecture and the Built Environment at KTH in Stockholm.

Addis Ababa in Ethiopia was

chosen as a case study. The students spent a month there and were asked to develop an idea that could fit into the local conditions, including culture and climate.

"Architects have technical skills, but often there is a lack of desk planning in students' work. Either the projects are completely unrealistic or too weak to give results."

The vertical farming model is an attempt to show how architects can help bring farming closer to consumers in cities. The building would use hydroponics (growing without soil) and it would house pigs and cows. Droppings would be used as fertiliser for vegetables.

"It is a closed, self-supportive ecosystem. Of course it is a vision, but it is possible to make it work," says Dan Johansson.

In Sweden, it takes five years to become an architect. The one-year programme focusing on development takes up the fourth year. It

started in September 2005 and so far 17 students, half of them Swedish, half of them exchange students, have completed the programme. Addis Ababa will continue to be used as a case study and Dan Johansson sees the potential to further develop the programme to involve architecture students from Ethiopia.

"I have met local architecture students in Addis Ababa and they talk about designing luxurious villas. Our focus lies with issues that are crucial for the public good." □



The model of vertical farming is a vision of how food production can move closer to the consumers in cities. Photo: D. Johansson

International competition launched in Vancouver

The Swedish Government invites researchers and university students to participate in its international idea competition 'Cities Beyond Oil'.

"We need to break the dependence on oil. This is an attempt to stimulate interest among key actors," said Mårten Lilja, Secretary of State at the Ministry for Sustainable Development.

Environmental changes

The competition was launched at the event, Smart Urban Fabrics, where the environmental challenges linked to the rapid growth of the world's cities were outlined. Competition participants will be asked to "deliver ideas for how cities can develop a sustainable, energy-efficient urban fabric, beyond the era of oil".

Cities Beyond Oil is targeted primarily at master's level students within universities and institutes of technology, but is also open to postgraduate students, researchers and professionals. The idea is that participants will work in multidisciplinary teams; architecture, social sciences, economics, transportation and infrastructure planning are particularly important fields.

Worldwide competition

"In order to receive a number of contributions from every continent of the world we will use our network within universities to promote the competition. Ideally, teaching should be adapted for students participating in the competition," said professor Göran Cars at KTH, Architecture and the Built Environment.



An international jury will evaluate the proposals. The winners will be invited to present their proposals at the World Urban Forum IV in Nanjing, China, 2008. Göran Cars expects to receive groundbreaking ideas and would like to see the very best proposal further developed in a PhD thesis. "The idea appeals to KTH and we will be looking for funds for that." □

"Bottom-up approach is more efficient"



Ms. Frederika C. Rentoy, Head of Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department, Quezon City, the Philippines, and one of the speakers of the networking event 'Waste as a Source of Energy to Combat Climate Change'.

What makes Quezone City's waste management special?

"It used to be the dirtiest city in the Manila region. Uncollected garbage was a problem. Now, just a

few years later, the city has dramatically changed for the better."

What exactly have you done?

"We have introduced solid waste diversion, primarily through composting and recycling. The result is 30 percent less garbage sent to the refuse dump, and the diversion rate is still increasing."

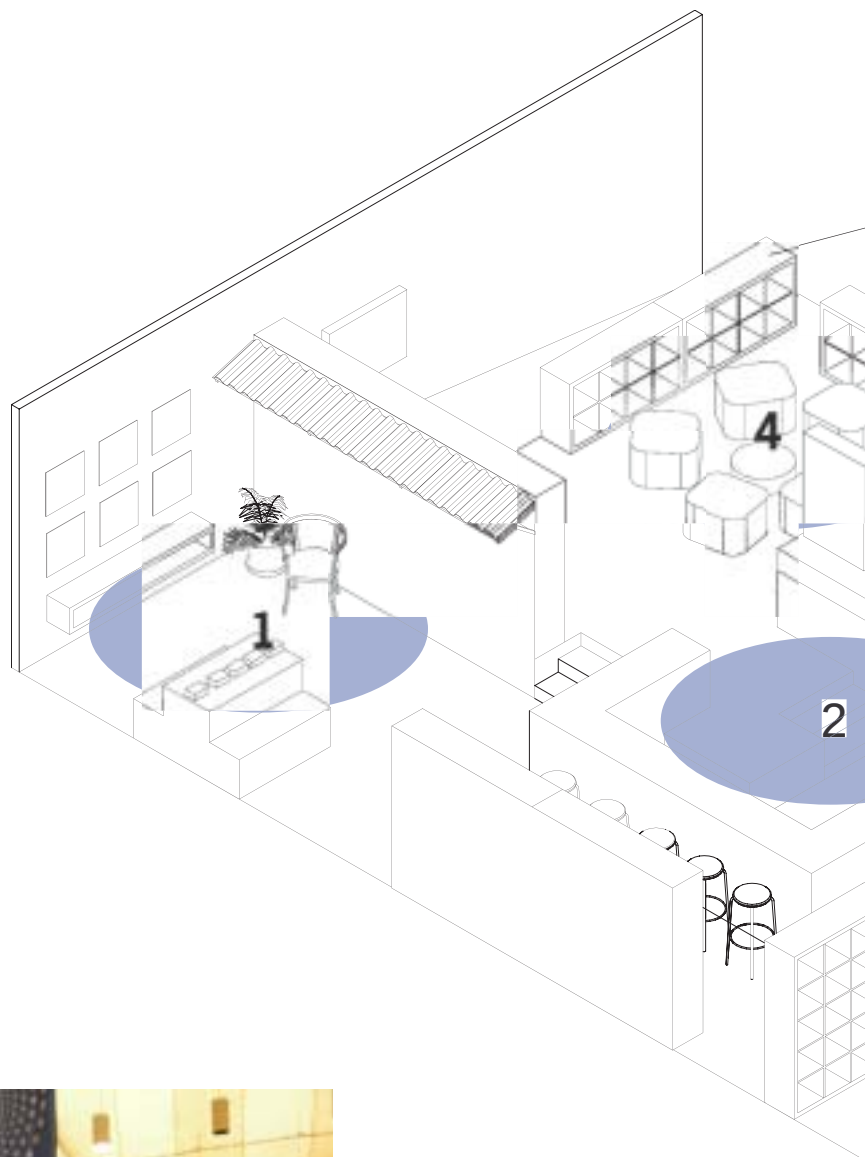
How can you make people start recycling?

"We implemented community-based programmes with local officials. Ninety small communities are engaged and together with them we discuss the gains in revenue and public health and sanitation. For instance, the cost for transporting garbage has decreased substantially."

Each year since 2003 you have managed to involve 1,000 people in cleaning up the river banks. How does it work?

"Volunteers from the 101 communities situated along the 41 rivers and creeks are offered a meal allowance of \$2.7 per day or \$60 monthly to clean and clear the rivers and creeks in their respective community. The participation of the residents prove that without people's initiatives the programme objective will be hard to attain." □

1. Exhibition on Housing Finance
– Projects financed by Sida



Ms Anna K. Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, addressed the audience in the Swedish exhibition stand.

“The Swedish Exhibition”

The Swedish Exhibition Area was an active hub for information and meetings. The booth was manned from 9am to 7pm and visitors met Swedish representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations. When there was a special occasion – like the launch of the Urban Policy, over one hundred people filled the area.

3. Information about Swedish organizations

Sida

Royal College of Technology

Save the Children

Lund University

Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning

National Heritage Board of Sweden

Malmö City

The Government Offices of Sweden

The Sustainable City

Smart Urban Fabrics

2. Information desk for informal meetings and providing of information



4. Launch area with seating facilities for informal meetings



What did you think about WUF?



Gertrude Ngabirano
The Lake Victoria Initiative,
Uganda

"The inclusive approach struck me as most interesting. We need to include everybody; governance, leadership and women."



Ritma Dubrovskā
Project Implementation Unit,
Latvia

"You gain professional knowledge. After an event like this, you start to see with a broader perspective."



Salomon Keffa
Urban Planner, Ethiopia

"The approach to urban development that we are using in Ethiopia is a bit old. We use old thinking in new situations. I gained new knowledge on urban planning, governance and public participation."

Views about Sweden@WUF3

Extracts from the guest book

Visitors to the Swedish exhibition stand were invited to leave a message in the guest book that lay on the information desk throughout the week. Many people requested more information about different projects and attached their business cards. Others just wrote down their spontaneous comments - here are some of them:

"I found the Swedish display to be highly engaging speaking in graphic design + tactility to my teaching + experience. Well done!"

Greg Finnegan Ph. D.
Managing Director, Centre for Sustainable Communities Canada

"The women in Sierra Leone need help to achieve social, economic and political empowerment – to take charge of their lives after all they have been through during the 10 years of conflict. Our organisation is concerned with gender equality, advocacy for policy change, and implementing concrete projects on the ground to help poor women to translate their lives into active ones... Please help! God bless you richly. We have 27 slums around Freetown alone."

Rosaline M'Carthy
Chairperson, Women's Forum

"Very interested in your exhibition on waste recycling. We are working with an urban poor community and seek technical advice and assistance on how best to organise the community we are working with and to transform and convert waste into energy (and other resources) to mitigate climate change."

Semwanga and Dr Moses

"I am very impressed with Sweden's progressive stance on sustainable development and would love to discuss the possibility of working/finishing my studies in Sweden and bring back expertise to apply in North America."

James Nevison,
Master's student in International Leadership

"I have visited your exhibition stand and wish to acknowledge your efforts towards solving housing poverty through microfinance. The concept has universal potential, especially for developing economies like us – Nigeria. There are millions of people who are in dire need of Sida assistance in Africa, especially Nigeria where about 150 million people (60 percent) live on less than 1 US Dollar per day. We wish to work with you in the nearest future."

Dr Timothy Olu Nubi
University of Lagos

The anti-urban donor syndrome

Urban issues are 'hot', but not in the donor community, where they are firmly anchored at the bottom of everyone's list.

By Göran Tannerfeldt

Urban populations increase rapidly and urban poverty is increasing, with health indicators even worse than in poor rural areas. The eradication of slums is a Millennium Development Goal. However, Sida is one of very few donors with an urban division. In most other agencies there is no 'institutional home' for these issues, which are handled on an ad hoc basis by departments and persons not specialised in the field. Even though the multilateral institutions are slightly better, they are still poorly equipped to deal with urban development.

Why is it like this, when all objective facts speak in favour of increased involvement and substantial support?

It is true that rural poverty still persists and is often more evident than urban poverty. But who believes today that the future for a predominantly poor rural country is to keep the growing population in the rural areas? And is there any development expert in the donor community who could possibly believe that

a country can develop while 60-70 percent of its population lives in rural villages, with an economy based on low-production traditional family-based agriculture? Since this is a scenario that has not succeeded anywhere, how then could it be adopted by the donor community?



Göran Tannerfeldt,
Senior Consultant,
Sida

It is absolutely justified to support rural development, but that does not mean that urban development and urban poverty should not have support. Where is the rationale for development cooperation to only promote rural development? And how is this supposed to promote economic, social and cultural development?

It is obvious that national governments are partly responsible since they have not put urban poverty

on the agenda and it is unfortunate that Poverty Reduction Strategies in most cases fail to realise the magnitude and nature of urban poverty.

So we may be able to detect some possible explanations for the rural bias based on rational arguments, but they are only partially valid. In the end it seems that irrational factors must play a major role. The rapid urbanisation is frightening and governments and donors unite in unrealistic visions of a more stable and happy social order in the rural village, where life is perceived to be more 'natural'. Also, when donor countries are quite recently urbanised they may tend to look back on country life as a lost paradise. Obviously you will never find anybody who would admit that this kind of emotional thinking could influence policies and decisions, but when you cannot see any rational explanation to the anti-urban donor bias, the conclusion must be that it is an irrational behaviour.

So it seems that cognitive therapy is the only hope for curing this collective psychological syndrome. □

"Children were rarely mentioned"

"At WUF3 there was a general lack of age sensitivity and children and young people were rarely mentioned. Youth were in focus in relation to crime prevention and urban safety, but actions were not presented as integral to more comprehensive approaches. Preventive measures should include younger children but there was no evidence that this was part of anyone's agenda.

In the exhibition hall there were

very few international Non-Governmental Organisations of the kind that are normally involved in social development issues, like Oxfam, Care, Plan, Action Aid and Save the Children. It is obvious that the urban physical environment is not understood as relevant in the context of social development, just like urban planning rarely considers the concerns of the marginalised and the impact it has on their lives. This is a mistake

that is already recognised by Save the Children, Sweden and Sida. Efforts have been initiated (the seminar 'A better childhood in the city' in Stockholm, May 22, 2006) to bridge the gap between different disciplines in order that the needs of poor people, including children and young people, become part of urban development and planning – from the beginning and not as an afterthought."

Gabriella Olofsson,
Save the Children, Sweden

Urban growth requires new financial solutions

Text: Fredrik Thomasson

To even partly reach the Millennium Development Goals will require investments far surpassing the financial capacities of municipalities in the South. A more 'equal' challenge to both rich and poor countries is safety and security. Violence seems to be linked as much to social exclusion and inequality as to poverty in absolute terms.

The need for investment in urban areas in the South is such that, whatever the amount spent by donors or national governments, real progress will not be achieved without involving private enterprise or market-driven solutions. To what extent such solutions have become politically acceptable was discussed many times at WUF3. Judging from the responses in question-and-answer sessions, and in the informal discussions after events and panels, the market-driven approach is still far from uncontroversial.

Privatisation of water

Many participants referred to the lack of success of privatisation; an example often used is the privatisation of water distribution in large cities in the South. Still, a clear and positive conclusion drawn from the discussions is that the debate is becoming more nuanced, with less rigid positioning. The promoters recognise that many experiments have been unsuccessful, and that the reforms have not managed to improve the situation of the poor, while the detractors admit that

there is space for new solutions if the requirements of the poor are to be met within the foreseeable future.

On one hand we have municipalities in predominately middle-income countries that have some sort of access to long-term financing

“Several government and international organisations claimed that there is money available to finance interventions but that they did not find enough good projects to invest the money in.”

instruments such as bonds. On the other hand we have the low-income countries where municipalities can seldom gain access to external finance, except in the form of developmental aid.

Low-income countries

Most of the examples of innovative financing mentioned at WUF3 were from countries with existing financial markets. It should be discussed to what extent such financing options are open to countries with finances and politics in disarray – often the poorest countries. If the talk about trying to introduce market forces and external capital into, for instance, urban infrastructure investments in these countries is serious, then national governments and the international community need to change both regulations and attitudes.

A glance at the World Bank's list of low-income countries and especially those defined as Highly

Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) shows clearly that many of the African countries, with rapid urbanisation and large parts of the urban population already in slums and informal settlements, will hardly get access to advanced financial mechanisms to fund interventions.

The projects and solutions discussed at WUF3 mirrored this division between the haves and the have-nots. In places with more or less functioning governing bodies, whether national agencies or municipalities, the natural partner of Northern development agencies are these entities. In countries where governance does not reach levels that make such investments viable, the role of NGOs is more important.

Frustration among poor

Ironically, this means that the demands on self-organisation of slum-dwellers, for example, are higher in the poorest countries – the poorer the community, the more responsible it becomes for its own development. What can sometimes strike external observers as unrealistic demands from poor communities on city authorities may only reflect the frustration of the poorest segments of the population.

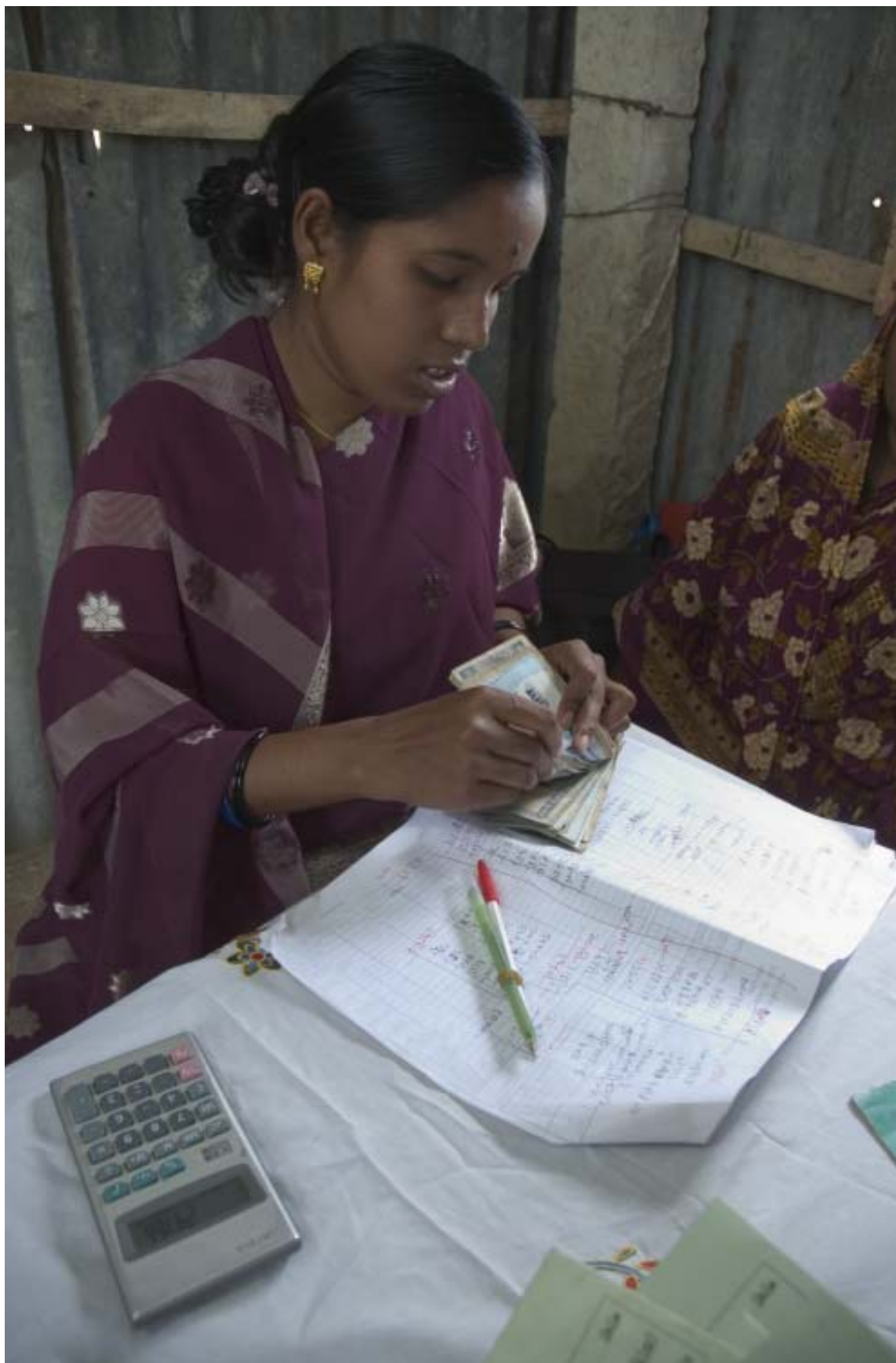


Photo: A. Gunnartz



Lack of safety and security has a negative impact on urban development in general and needs to be tackled together with other crucial issues.

Illustration: J. Waldersten



Nevertheless, it is important to state that WUF not only has a role in dealing with the poorest inhabitants of the world and the most difficult situations. There is much to say for improving the situation in, for example, heavily populated Asian countries, which contain large parts of the world population. Improvements in India and China led to huge gains in the number of people enjoying better living conditions.

Good projects are scarce
Several government and international organisations claimed that there is money available to finance interventions but that they did not find enough good projects to invest the money in. This is a view that is hardly shared by many NGOs. How come this discrepancy is so

was obvious, especially in areas where there is a lack of government or municipal capacity.

The division between governmental realities on one hand and the expectations, and in many cases just demands, of civil society on the other was one of the most distinct tensions at WUF3.

Urban Safety

The fact that the security situation to a large extent both governs individual lives and influences collective choices, has only recently been identified as one of the critical factors in the promotion of urban development.

A range of safety topics were discussed at WUF3, for instance how private companies have taken over many of the traditional tasks of the

similar social conditions may be the root of problems such as social exclusion and inequality. Cultural factors are also obvious – different regions and countries, even areas within countries – have strikingly different indices of violence, which are difficult to explain except in relation to economic factors.

Security might also be connected to demographic circumstances; cities in the South have predominantly young populations, especially large groups of young unemployed males. Social relationships also tend to weaken in growing urban zones, which can lead to a deterioration of the security situation.

Safety and the poor

Many events focused especially on vulnerable groups in relation to safety. In some cities mortality due to violence is the biggest killer in certain groups of society. Young men living in the poor areas of Sao Paulo and other Brazilian cities, for example, are five times more likely to die of violence than middle class youths in the same cities. The impact of insecurity on the poor has been proven to be more severe; they do not have the means to defend themselves. Such defence can take many forms; by protecting ones home, choosing safe modes of transport or by hiring the services of private security companies.

Several events discussed concrete measures for dealing with security issues, while others focused on how urban planning and social projects can target specific security issues. The usual tensions between rather idealistic plans focusing on the totality of the 'human security' concept, and down-to-earth solutions to specific problems, were evident. This is a strength of WUF; both levels are necessary when trying to both deal with concrete everyday problems and envision how future development of cities might tackle these central issues. □

“The poorer the community, the more responsible it becomes for its own development.”

prevalent? One of the reasons may be the shift of international donors towards supporting governments and municipalities directly in the form of budget support, often with the intention of building 'good governance'. NGOs and civil society organisations cannot easily tap into such resources and are often reduced to pleading for resources from international donors. In poorer countries especially, NGOs offer services that traditionally fall to local or national authorities.

NGOs are important
In practice, such financing often takes the shape of support to microcredit organisations that loan money for the building of homes, for starting small enterprises and to community-based organisations offering services in informal settlements. When discussing the issues concretely in the context of debates and events at WUF, the importance of NGO participation

police and this has led to greater inequalities. Different ways of addressing safety issues by involving local inhabitants, both on the wider city level and in the context of smaller neighbourhoods, were presented. It was also pointed out in several contexts that policing and security are often national and heavily centralised functions that individual cities find it difficult to influence.

At times, development practice looks like a one-way communication – the North teaching the South – and in some cases Southern countries teaching other Southern countries in a lateral exchange of information and experiences. However, some of the core WUF issues tended to be dealt with in a more 'equal' fashion, such as the problems of safety and security. Both North and South have problems with urban safety, and even if the material conditions are different,

Small measures improve security

Sida recognises safety as a critical concern in urban development. Security measures can be as simple as increased lighting in certain townships. This has been implemented in Nelson Mandela Bay, one of three municipalities in South Africa that are part of Sida's Urban Development Programme.

Women and girls in these districts now feel considerably freer to move around without the constant fear of assault and rape in dark and crowded slums.

In Buffalo City, South Africa, a municipal safety and security application has been created. Statistical information from the police, fire & rescue and disaster management is collected and the analysis is an important part of violence prevention interventions. □

Young urbanists for safety

Urban planning and design have a great impact on security in cities. The networking event 'Urban Safety in Practice' stressed the importance of including youth experiences when planning for safer cities.

The U>SAFE concept was launched at the 'Urban Safety Arena for Exchange' event. It is an idea-sharing and exchange forum where young urban professionals will meet every second year to present youth-sensitive proposals for increased safety in cities.

One of the U>SAFE contributions dealt with hip-hop and public spaces in Johannesburg. The architect, Mr. Kevin Pheko, had designed a hip-hop academy and community centre to bridge the gap between the sub-culture and society. By acknowledging aspects of their culture, like graffiti art, they would be better incorporated in the regeneration of the city.

U>SAFE is run jointly by UN-HABITAT, Chalmers University of Technology and Young Urban Network (YUN). YUN is an international non-profit organisation headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden and it targets young urban professionals around the world.

"We want to promote the exchange of ideas. At present most of our members are from European countries, but we would like to see more from the rest of the world," says Ms. Ewa Bialecka-Colin, chair of YUN.

The network members communicate mainly online and arrange projects, such as a series of workshops on urban safety, in different European cities.

"Safety and security is not our only concern, but since this is a relatively new topic within urban planning there are few examples of good practice. The workshops were an attempt to contribute to urban safety improvements on-site." □

"Young people have to fight to be heard"



Ulrike Deppert (23) from Lund in Sweden, attended WUF3 as the official youth delegate of the Swedish government.

What is the point of a youth delegate?

"50 percent of the world's population is aged 25 or younger. Therefore, it is really important that we are present at important UN meetings like WUF. The UN usually refers to youth as 'the leaders

of tomorrow', but we need to be involved in the decision making process of today. Since all the goals that are set today, like the MDGs for 2015, will be executed in the future, by us, there needs to be better continuity."

'Youth mainstreaming' is a concept you use. What does it mean?

"It means that you automatically include youth perspectives in sustainable urban development, like city planning. There is often a gender analysis nowadays, but there needs to be a youth analysis, too. Young people today have to fight to get their voices heard."

Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

"There should be a youth-led advisory council to UN-HABITAT. It could support the HABITAT in project planning, but could also be a permanent office to which young people could turn with their ideas."

Were youth voices sufficiently heard in Vancouver?

"Not at all. There was only me and a youth delegate from Norway who were officially appointed by our governments. I also noticed a lack of representation from national youth unions and slum organisations." □

The politics of water

Efforts to provide clean water may lead to conflicts

Water has become a highly politicised issue for many cities in the South and water projects are sometimes plagued by conflict.

'Addressing Conflict in Water and Sanitation Services for Urban Poor' was an event jointly organised and sponsored by Sida and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It focused on how to address conflicts when extending water and sanitation services, especially in slums and informal settlements.

Four cases were presented, from South Africa, Zimbabwe, India and Vietnam. Dr. Janakarajan Srinivasan gave a succinct presentation of the situation in the fringe areas of Chennai (formerly Madras) in India, where conflicts among different stakeholders have arisen as the city consumes more water from peri-urban areas.

Ms. Refilwe Pitso, an expert in municipal water governance in South Africa, gave an overview of the connection between land issues and the introduction of water infrastructure in poor communities in the Pretoria area. In privately owned areas it has created resistance from landowners and led to protests by the local population.

Dr. Bekithemba Gumbo described the conflicts in a shared watershed created by a large project bringing water from the Pungwe River to the town of Mutare in Eastern Zimbabwe. He underlined how poor communities must be involved in the early planning of infrastructure projects, otherwise their voices tend to disappear and the situation in the poorest areas remains unchanged.



Water is a prerequisite for life but also a source of conflict. Photo: L. Roberts

Dr. Ranjith Perera showed how deficient planning and execution of waste disposal lead to pollution of both ground and surface water on the outskirts of Hanoi in Vietnam. He proposed different methods, addressing both technical and political issues, to prevent conflicts over land use and pollution in heavily populated urban fringe areas.

The moderator, Mr. Gondwe, water official from Malawi, pointed out the similarities between these geographically distinct situations. He said that it is difficult to avoid conflict, but also that conflict can be a positive agent for change when dealt with in a constructive manner.

A lively discussion followed. Many of the points touched upon the common themes in the presentations: how to guarantee that

projects actually benefit the poorest parts of the population, how to involve all relevant stakeholders and how to defuse potential conflicts among parties. Pricing of water and sanitation services were also discussed, as well as how relationships between settlers and landowners are affected by water issues. Notwithstanding the geographical spread of the participants, coming from both South and North, there appeared to be a consensus on the necessity of involving all stakeholders when designing and executing water projects. It is especially important to focus on the poorest, otherwise the risk is always 'business as usual' which often means no benefits for the poor, as Dr. Gumbo put it. □

HABITAT re-defines its role within UN



"The Swedish commitment to urban issues is a model and very obvious internationally," says Inga Björk Klevby.
Photo: K. Gossé

Ms. Inga Björk Klevby from Sweden recently took office as Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT in Nairobi.

Inga Björk Klevby arrives somewhat delayed to the appointment on one of the upper floors of the Vancouver Convention Centre. Here, UN-HABITAT, the organiser of WUF3, has established its temporary office. All key persons within the organisation are present and today that includes Björk Klevby. Her agenda is busy, but she has managed to squeeze in an interview between two other meetings in the early morning hours.

Inga Björk Klevby was appointed as Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT in October 2005. At that time she was ambassador to Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. But neither Nairobi nor UN-HABITAT was unfamiliar to her.

"For four and a half years I was Swedish ambassador to Kenya and, as such, I represented Sweden on the Governing Board of UN-HABITAT."

One of the key issues for the

Deputy Executive General is to work on the strengthening of UN-HABITAT, and to design a more strategic long-term plan for 2008-2013.

"In many countries, land is inappropriately used, for instance 'land grabbing' is common. We need to work on the administration of land – not least a woman's right

"In the light of the reformation of the UN we need to see what priorities to make. What should our niche within the UN-system be?"

"In the light of the reformation of the UN we need to see what priorities to make. What should be our niche within the UN system?"

Land and housing rights and improved, sustainable living conditions score high on the list of priorities for the coming years.

to inherit land. In this context the Global Land Tool Network, which Sida supports, is an important initiative."

In general, Björk Klevby thinks that Sweden is at the forefront of urban development.

Facts: UN-HABITAT

UN-HABITAT was established in 1978 as the UN Centre for Human Settlements after the first UN Conference on Human Settlements held two years earlier in Vancouver. In 2002, when urbanisation and its impact became increasingly important on the UN-agenda, the agency was awarded its status as a complete programme of the UN system.

Its mandate, described by the UN General Assembly, is "to promote environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all."

UN-HABITAT's present budget (\$80.5 million biennially) represents an increase of nearly 60 percent over the previous one.

Some 200 people work at the headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The agency has regional offices in Rio, Brazil and Fukuoka, Japan.

www.unhabitat.org

"Sida has very good programmes for promoting land rights and slum upgrading; and nationally, Sweden works very well with urban issues. I think this should continue to be reflected internationally."

UN-HABITAT is responsible for the Millennium Development Goal 'Cities without Slums' (goal 7, target 11). The efforts to attain the goals are obviously a priority.

"By 2030 it is estimated that 2 billion people will live in slums. We need to deal with slums and focus on slum upgrading, but also tackle issues like water supply and sanitation in urban areas."

Urban planning and governance are other key issues. Björk Klevby claims that UN-HABITAT can first and foremost promote norms and values; for instance, the need to involve inhabitants in the planning and development of cities. She also stresses the need for supporting efforts towards multi-level governance of cities. Local authorities and municipalities need a stronger mandate.

Complex field

Björk Klevby has an impressive list of qualifications. An economist by profession, she has worked for many years within international finance. She has also been in charge of Sweden's international development cooperation policies, programmes and budget. Her experience is that urban development is more complex than traditional sectoral aid, where you can focus to a greater extent on one specific area - for instance health or education.

"Urban issues are cross-cutting. They contain all the hard and soft issues you can think of; transport, electricity, housing, social issues, children, education, youth, women, health and environment. You cannot solve urban development issues if you do not deal with all these different parts." □

New report reveals evidence of urban inequalities

UN-HABITAT's biannual report, *State of the World's Cities 2006/7* was launched at WUF3. A novelty is the statistical distinction that is now being made between slum and non-slum dwellers. By analysing different segments within cities, the report reveals evidence of urban inequalities, for instance in access to housing, land, health, education and employment, and how they impact the urban poor. Slum-dwellers die at an earlier age, suffer from more hunger and illness, and are less educated than other people who live in cities.

The report covers a wide range of issues related to the rapid urbanisation. One of many interesting features is the chart presenting the global scorecard on slums. Some 100 countries have been analysed in terms of how well they have managed to deal with slum areas.

39,000 participated in Habitat JAM

As part of the preparation for WUF3, an online networking session called Habitat JAM was arranged in December 2005. Over a 72-hour period, 39,000 participants from 158 countries were connected to the Internet to discuss the future of our cities.

In total, seven JAM forums were arranged, covering a number of topics relating to the upcoming WUF: slum upgrading, access to water, environmental sustainability, finance, safety and humanity.

At a follow-up Habitat JAM networking event in Vancouver, people stressed the democratic nature of the JAM. UN-HABITAT will now make Habitat JAM a permanent online facility. □

Award winner critical to short-term city marketing

Mr. John Friedmann, winner of the 2006 UN-HABITAT Award, held a special UN-HABITAT lecture entitled 'The Wealth of Cities: Towards an Assets-based Development of Newly Urbanising Regions'.

John Friedmann argued that the wealth of a city lies in the progressive and long-term development of its assets, such as human resources, cultural heritage, infrastructure, nature and environment. In his lecture, he called for an "endogenous development – a development from within".

Today, many cities show little trust in the ability to shape their own future but "try to make themselves as attractive as possible to global suitors, turning themselves into commodities for the capital market".

The chase after global sporting events like the Olympics is one example. Trying to attract global corporations with promises to deliver what they want of the city is another. John Friedmann considers this short-term thinking. "Seducing global capital by selling off one's assets leads to an illusory development."

Developing cities' own assets require a visionary leadership and a collaboration where all relevant actors are involved, including local citizens.

John Friedmann is Honorary Professor at the University of British Columbia, Canada. □

Smaller cities grow the most

Text: Fredrik Thomasson

Projections indicate that in 2007, for the first time in history, the world's urban population will exceed its rural population. WUF highlighted the importance of planning when dealing with present needs and projected growth.

Urban planning, having been 'out of fashion' for some time, is once again considered one of the instrumental tools for dealing with urban growth. It seems that most parties have come to the realisation that urban development has to rely on domestic resources. This might be one of the reasons why more efforts have recently gone into strengthening regulatory frameworks, and the promotion of the role of traditionally weak local governments. The role of the state is to create the legal and institutional framework so that local governments can provide the needed infrastructure and services.

Much focus has also been directed into changing the conditions of land and housing ownership in informal settlements and slums. Land tenure and avoidance of evictions was widely discussed at WUF3. One of many such initiatives is UN-HABITAT's Global Campaign for Secure Tenure.

Translating MDGs

When discussing the development of cities, it is at the municipal level that things have to happen. Mayors from countries such as the Philippines and Morocco talked about how they translate the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into plans and projects. What was striking was the elegant simplicity of many solutions – when there is political will and courage, solutions may appear deceptively easy to apply.

How to achieve the MDGs was constantly discussed at WUF3 and often connected to urban planning. It is a clear indication that the goals have taken root in the development community and gained recognition with both national and local governments in many parts of

“Whatever one's views of urbanisation, it is not reversible, so the only strategy seems to be to deal with it.”

the world. Examples from Egypt, Thailand and Tunisia showed that it is possible to address some of the problems of urban growth, without exceptional economic growth, by planning and focusing on pro-poor issues in urban planning and development.

The connection between urban planning and city politics is clear to the point of being self-explanatory. It seems more difficult to create a bond that makes politicians buy into the advantages of planning to both achieve sustainable pro-poor results and secure their own political survival. Planning requires timeframes that are often longer than electoral periods. One way of dealing with this issue is breaking up long-term goals into smaller tasks that can be delivered within a mandate period.

Urbanisation is often seen as something intrinsically negative and the examples to illustrate this have often been the largest cities of the South. One of the central points of WUF and one of its greatest strengths is in countering such 'city-bashing'. It was repeatedly stated that whatever one's views are of urbanisation, it is not reversible, so the only strategy seems to be to deal with it.

Mega-cities in focus

But even in urban circles there is often a tendency to discuss the issues around the challenges that mega-cities face. The continent with the highest urbanisation rates, Africa, actually has few of these cities, and the main projected population growth will be in cities with less than one million inhabitants. What needs to be recognised, and to a larger extent debated, is how to bring smaller urban centres into focus and give such towns the tools and resources to address growth at an earlier stage. Otherwise the risk is that they will encounter the same problems that are plaguing bigger cities. Informal settlements and slums are not only problems for big cities.

A future challenge will be to investigate the different needs in both planning and implementation between larger and smaller cities. Some issues are probably different – including the linkages with the surrounding rural areas, various environmental issues, land use and the possibility of expansion. Smaller cities' political leverage on both the national and international level may also influence their access to resources.



Dar es Salaam Photo: L. Camara

At meetings such as WUF3, many groups and organisations propagate their own ideas and agendas. This was also clear in the sessions on planning and urban regulation. One such issue was urban agriculture where organisations argued in favour of better conditions for urban farmers. In many cities a large amount of vegetables especially are grown within the city limits and are a source of income for many urban dwellers. In conflict with this, many water and sanitation specialists sustain that the use

is hardly sustainable and the need for energy in rapidly developing economies is voracious. We also know that the sources used today are far from eternal. Energy is an area where the trust in technology is still widespread, but to implement new, environmentally and economically feasible energy sources is vital if we want to protect the environment and create sustainable development.

New financial solutions and private-public partnerships might

and heating are also a major cause of domestic accidents.

One of the typical measures when comparing countries is energy consumption; an oft-quoted example is how the USA consumes around 25 percent of the world's energy output for less than 5 percent of the world's population. Urban centres in the South often have problems in delivering a constantly sufficient electricity supply. A well-known example is the high-tech companies in India that often end up generating their own electricity in order to secure their energy needs. But urban energy crises are not only affecting the developing world. The energy crisis in California is perhaps the most commonly cited example of how the energy infrastructure is inadequate to meet demand, even in the world's arguably richest large economy.

Most examples of ways to deal with energy came from middle and high-income countries. Poor countries obviously consume very little energy and are in dire need of expanding energy production and infrastructure. But very poor coun-

“The energy issue is perhaps the one area where the contradiction between development and environmental issues becomes most obvious.”

of treated water for irrigation is madness and that the use of non-treated urban water (often sewage) for agricultural uses will only lead to increased spread of disease.

Nutrition experts sustain that urban soil depletion and the lack of fertilisers lead to inferior quality of the urban agricultural output. That urban agriculture needs to be regulated is probably a point that most would agree upon. This is a typical case where urban planning could make a difference. Urban planning, or any developmental issue for that matter, seldom benefits from the taking of extreme positions. Nevertheless, local governments need to decide whose interests are going to be catered to and what the general direction of development should be in their city.

Modern energy services
Access to affordable, modern energy services is defined as a prerequisite for sustainable human development. The energy issue is perhaps the one area where the contradiction between development and environmental issues becomes most obvious. The use of non-renewable energy in the North

be easier to obtain in the field of energy than, for instance, in water and sanitation. Most people in the South accept the fact that energy should be paid for and that there are individual benefits in keeping one's energy consumption low. Nevertheless, it is hard to deal with these issues without considering the differences in energy use between rich and poor countries.

There are also parallels with demand management in the water sector; one of the most important tasks is to raise the efficiency of energy use. But even with successful conservation and energy-saving programmes the projected energy needs of growing cities will demand substantial increases in energy production.

But as was also made evident at WUF, energy is not only an issue on the macro level; the energy people use for their daily needs is also intimately connected to everyday risks and health. Not only is general pollution a factor in respiratory disease, but open-fire cooking indoors is a grave health concern in communities without access to gas or electricity, or with high energy prices. Open fires for cooking

“The use of non-renewable energy in the North is hardly sustainable and the need for energy in fast-developing economies is voracious.”

tries first need to deal with creating basic access to energy to be able to spur development.

Transportation

Economic growth tends to quickly translate itself into greater use of privately owned cars, resulting in traffic overload. Traffic and transportation are both heavy energy

users and are major sources of urban pollution. Slums and informal settlements tend to be situated on the outskirts of cities and the cost of transport is often a substantial part of household income; travelling as well takes up a large portion of the working day.

But urban mass transport is also an area where there is a large room for improvement; some cities in middle-income countries have made spectacular progress recently. Transport also seems to be a field where 'leapfrogging', or jumping over stages in technological adaptation, actually might be possible.

Transportation could also be one

of the areas where examples set by other cities can serve as a real fount of inspiration, as was made clear in the documentation and the events discussing successful mass transit projects. The bus systems of Curitiba, Brazil and Bogotá, Colombia are often cited as examples of how dedicated bus lanes and well designed routes can, quickly and less expensively than underground trains, for instance, address large cities' transit needs.

In the wider context, planning of cities is closely connected to transportation. Which models are to be followed – high-density settlements or suburban sprawl? Is the traditional city with dense housing

and a mix of commercial activities a nostalgic dream difficult to realise when meeting the needs of growing urban populations in poor countries? In most situations the choices are of course mixed – preserving city centres while facilitating transport for low-income residents in the periphery. Road building often tends to favour private car use. If investments in infrastructure are to be explicitly pro-poor, additional affordable mass transit must be offered in conjunction with investments in roads and viability. □

Circular thinking reduces the ecological footprint

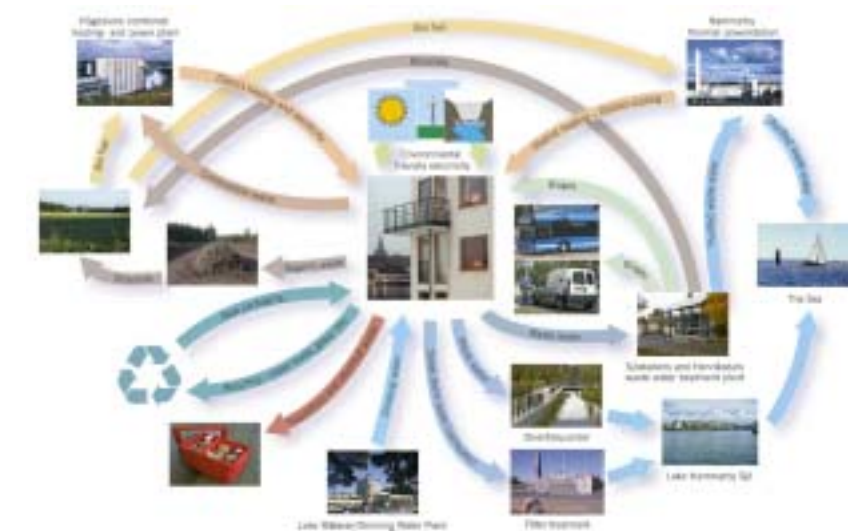
Sweden actively supports international efforts to implement sustainable thinking. The main features behind 'the Swedish concept' were presented at WUF3.

Hammarby Sjöstad, built on former dockland on the outskirts of Stockholm, has become a model for the 'sustainable city'. By introducing new energy and transport solutions, the aim is to reduce environmental impact and energy consumption by 50 percent, in comparison with normal building standards.

Holistic approach

"The idea is to go from linear to circular resource loops. It requires a holistic approach," says Professor Ulf Ranhagen.

Through multi-sectoral thinking, making use of the synergies between transport, housing, energy and waste you can reduce the ecological footprint. For instance, organic garbage and sludge can be used to produce energy. To replace fossil fuels with renewable sources of energy is one of the key objectives behind the concept.



An illustration of the circulation scheme applied in Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm.

The Swedish model implemented in Hammarby Sjöstad has received much international attention.

Useful in the South

The 'Sustainable Cities' networking event presented examples of how the concept has inspired projects across the world, including Canada (Project Toronto Waterfront) and China. Many questions were put to the panel, including how the concept can be applied in developing countries.

"Poverty will become an increasingly important perspective of

'Sustainable City'. The economic conditions in slum areas are different but the holistic approach is still useful," says Ranhagen.

Some 650 companies within the environmental field are members of the Swedish Environmental Technology Network, an organisation that focuses on implementing the vision of sustainable cities. The Swedish Trade Council supports the marketing of Swedish competence in an international context.

www.swedentech.com
www.hammarbysjostad.se



Strategic city planning has made households return to the city of Vancouver. The skyscrapers are an efficient way to use land and reduce travelling distances. Photo: A.Stuermer

Public consultation made the city more sustainable

Vancouver is ranked as one of the most desirable cities in the world to live in. Its stunning location only partly explains this success. Equally important is the strategic planning in which inhabitants are involved in shaping the future of their city.

The founders of Vancouver must have had a sense of beauty. Situated between water and snow-capped mountains, it is hard to think of a more attractive place for a city. 120 years later, the skyscrapers that continue to mushroom in downtown Vancouver add yet another impressive dimension to the place. However, natural assets are one thing, what you make of them is another.

“Sustainability was not a chapter in our charter but a way of doing business.”

This is a lesson learnt from the networking event ‘Planning Successful Sustainable Cities’, where the host of WUF3 was used as a case study. Vancouver has grown dramatically and doubled in size over the last 20 years. Today, nearly 600,000 people live in the densely populated city centre. Despite its size, it is remarkably quiet. There are relatively few cars, but a striking number of bike paths. There are many green areas, and not least the 30 kilometre long public waterfront the city is well known for.

“Sustainability was not a chapter in our charter but a way of doing business,” said Ann McAfee, Co-Director of Planning in Vancouver.

The success of the city is explained by a proactive planning department where civic society has been involved through public consultations. For instance, more than 100,000 people participated in the

design of Vancouver CityPlan, which was adopted in 1995 and set the framework for city planning. In the plan, it was agreed to reduce the reliance on cars and to make it easier to live close to work.

“We wanted to break the division between office and residential areas, to avoid a large population commuting in and out of the city every day. We wanted households to return to the inner city,” said Larry Beasley, Co-Director of Planning.

Vancouver has undergone a revitalisation. Housing above shops has been introduced and services like schools, libraries, parks and shopping should be within walking or transit distance. The many skyscrapers contribute to an urban density which has a positive impact on energy consumption.

“If people can walk to their jobs it has a huge effect on the transporta-

tion system,” said Beasley.

To encourage walking, the city has made an effort to add interest to the pavements. Pedestrians can enjoy lots of public art, fountains and street furniture. Walking is the most popular mode of transport after cycling.

The well-being of a city is not something that, once gained, lasts forever. Vancouver faces several challenges.

“We need to create a balance so that housing does not overcome offices. Affordability is another issue. As the city becomes more successful it gets more expensive for low and middle-income families. They begin to feel the pressure, and we are concerned about keeping the mix of people in the city,” said Beasley. □

www.vancouver.ca/ourcity



The citizens of Vancouver have agreed to reduce their reliance on cars. In the 1960s, public pressure managed to curb plans for a motorway through the city. Today cycling is the main mode of transport in the city centre. Photo: F. Thomasson

Malmö wants to host WUF 2012

The World Urban Forum is held every other year. After Nanjing in 2008 and Dubai in 2010, Malmö would like to host the global event. Malmö has 270,000 inhabitants and is the third largest city in Sweden. It is connected by a magnificent new bridge with the Danish capital, Copenhagen, and its 1.7 million inhabitants. Together these cities form the nucleus of the Öresund region, with 2.8 million inhabitants.

“Generally, there is too little focus on the growth and development of average-sized cities. Urbanisation is not primarily about the growth of mega-cities. Most people move to regional cities. This would be an opportunity for Sweden to show its contributions and good examples of city development,” says Mr Mårten Lilja, Secretary of State.

Malmö is a typical post-industrial city, where new job opportunities and housing appeared in former industrial areas. The city is also home to the 190-metre-high Turning Torso, designed by the world famous architect Santiago Calatrava.

The idea to propose Malmö as host of WUF6 was initiated by the mayor of Malmö, Ilmar Reepalu, but it is still a long process until the final decision is taken.

“Malmö needs to develop its proposal further. Then the government will decide if it should support the application or not. If it agrees, the matter will be discussed with UN-HABITAT,” says Lilja. □

WUF supports the global discussion

Lars Reuterswärd, Nairobi

Director of Global Division UN-HABITAT, and the overall coordinator of WUF3.

What is the main purpose of arranging WUF?

“It has two different objectives. One is to inform UN-HABITAT how all our partners view sustainable urban development so that we as a UN organisation can develop our agenda and make sure that our work is relevant.

WUF is also our main campaign tool in order to support the global discussion about sustainable urban development. We want to make sure that urban issues are brought to the fore – that they become important political issues and that resources on all levels are allocated for the purpose.”

What do you think about the growth of WUF? Some 10,000 people came to Vancouver.

“It is good that it is growing. Many more people need to be activated. Of course, there is a limit as to how big WUF can become, but we are not there yet. Also, the number of participants could very well diminish depending on the theme and the location of future WUFs.”



What happens to the discussions about urban development now that WUF3 is over?

“We will develop the Internet-based Habitat JAM into a continuous forum and campaign tool. We will also pay more attention to what our partners do between every WUF. In that sense, WUF becomes more and more of a process that stimulates activities among all partners.”

What will be the main themes of WUF4 in Nanjing, China?

“China has suggested ‘social harmony and urbanisation’ as the overall theme of WUF4, but it is not yet decided. We will need to discuss this with our partners and member countries before we make any decision.” □

Sida evaluates its role at WUF

Sida has initiated an external evaluation of its activities in relation to the last two World Urban Forums in Barcelona and Vancouver. A number of Sida employees and representatives from partner organisations, both in Sweden and elsewhere, will be asked at random to contribute with their views – if they feel that participating in WUF

has extended their network and if an increased number of contacts promotes their own work against urban poverty, for instance.

The idea is that the evaluation will indicate how conference projects like WUF should be conducted in the future and how Sida should invest in such activities. □

WUF1 – 2002
Nairobi, Kenya

‘Sustainable Urbanisation’

WUF2 – 2004
Barcelona, Spain

‘**Cities: Crossroads of Cultures,**
Inclusiveness and Integration?’

WUF3 – 2006
Vancouver, Canada

‘Our Future: Sustainable Cities
– Turning Ideas into Action’

WUF4 – 2008 - Nanjing, China

Sida@WUF3

In cooperation with Swedish and international partners, Sida arranged seven networking events at WUF3.

Monday 19 June

Book launch: More Urban – Less Poor

Networking event: Life in the Urban Landscape 1:
Waste as a Source of Energy to Combat Climate
Change

Tuesday 20 June

Networking event: Addressing Conflict in Water and
Sanitation Services for the Urban Poor

Networking event: Climate Change and Cities in the
South: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emission and Re-
ducing Urban Risk in a Warming World

Networking event: Innovative Finance for Infrastruc-
ture and Basic Service Provision for Low Income Hu-
man Settlements

Networking event: Life in the Urban Landscape 2:
Leadership and Community Involvement in Local
Governance

Wednesday 21 June

Networking event: A Successful Concept: Microcredits
for Incremental Housing Development

Networking event: Life in the Urban Landscape 3: Ur-
ban Development for the Poor – the Interdependency
between Heritage, Sustainability and Liveability

Urban Research Discussion



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